

JOURNALS
OF
EXCURSIONS

IN THE

ALPS:

THE PENNINE, GRAIAN, COTTIAN, RHETIAN,
LEPONTIAN, AND BERNESE.

BY

WILLIAM BROCKEDON,

AUTHOR OF THE "ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PASSES OF THE ALPS," &c.

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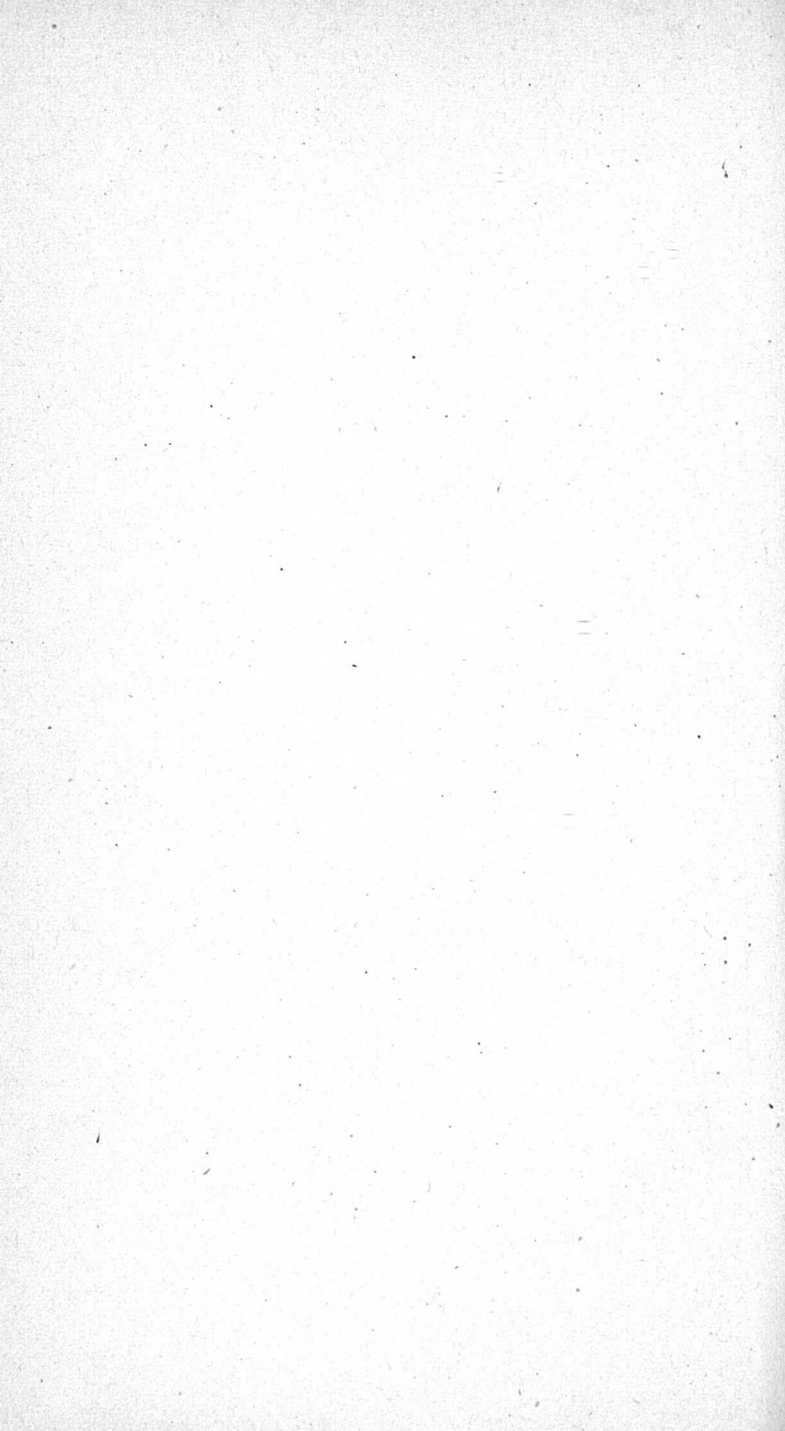
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1833.

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LONDON:

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NEW MAP
 to Illustrate Brockedon's
 JOURNALS OF EXCURSIONS
 IN THE ALPS,
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## DEDICATION.

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MY DEAR STANFIELD,

As my Companion in the first of these Excursions in the Alps, you are identified with this book, which will remind you of some of the magnificent scenes we have enjoyed together; and I offer its dedication to you, in testimony of the sincere regard with which I subscribe myself,

Dear STANFIELD,

Yours very faithfully,

WM BROCKEDON.

To CLARKSON STANFIELD, Esq.

Sc. Sc. Sc.



## PREFACE.

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WITHIN these few years the press has so teemed with Excursions and Journals, published by authors who have visited those lands of promise and of enjoyment to summer tourists—Switzerland, Savoy, and Italy—that the Author would scarcely have felt disposed to increase the number, had not the extraordinary success of his “*Illustrations of the Passes of the Alps*” shewn that the public interest in those scenes has not been diminished. Of the text which accompanied that work, the portion drawn from these Journals was confined chiefly to the history and topography of such of the *Passes* as it contained; hence some of the Author’s friends, who think that his experience and observation may be useful to future travellers in the Alps, have persuaded him to publish his Personal Narrative from the Journals which he kept during his Excursions. In acceding to this,

he has, perhaps too willingly, entertained a hope that the request of a few may also express the wish of many.

These Excursions have not been altogether made over the beaten track of tourists, many of the places which the Author visited being scarcely known to English travellers; but they are so interesting, from the grandeur and beauty of the scenes which they display, or the character and habits of the people who dwell among them, that he ventures to believe his Journals will be found to contain some novelty and information which may assist the actual tourist — its chief object, as well as furnish amusement to the fire-side traveller. He therefore submits to the Public the notes which he made during the journeys which were undertaken expressly for his “Illustrations of the Passes.”

Previous to the first of these Excursions, the Author had crossed the Alps by the route of the Simplon, on his way into Italy in 1821, and repassed them by the Brenner in 1822; to which tour occasional references are made.

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IN THE  
GRAIAN, COTTIAN, AND PENNINE ALPS:

INCLUDING THE  
PASSES OF THE COL DU BON-HOMME, THE COL DE LA SEIGNE,  
THE COL DE SESTRIÈRES, THE MONT GENEVRE,  
THE COL DU LAUTARET,  
THE LITTLE ST. BERNARD, AND THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.



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### CHAPTER I.

Departure—Paris—Route to Lyons, by Dijon—Côte d'Or—  
Chalons-sur-Saône—Coche d'Eau—Lyons—Punishment  
for fraudulent Bankruptcy—Route to Geneva—Perte du  
Rhône—Nantua—Geneva.

LEFT London with Mr. Stanfield at seven o'clock  
in the evening of the 25th of July, 1824, by a  
Dover coach, which corresponds with the Hiron-  
delle, a French diligence from Calais to Paris.  
We arrived at five in the morning of the 26th  
at Dover; and at two o'clock, after a passage of  
three hours, we landed at Calais. The voyage,  
as usual, was to me one of suffering; but amidst  
the annoyances of paying toll to Neptune for  
the passage, we found amusement in the affec-  
tations of an English girl, who was going, she

said, to seek service as a cook in France. She complained of her eyesight having suffered by too much reading!

On landing, we were conducted to the Custom-house. An acquaintance, who had agreed to accompany us to Paris, was alarmed lest some letters, which he had been requested to take thither, should be discovered: just before he left the packet he had thrust them into one of his boots. The douanier, in making a personal search, missed the *right* leg, though he felt the other, and our friend thus escaped. It is unpardonable, that persons going to France should be solicited to take letters at a great personal risk, from a beggarly consideration of the postage.

Our places had been secured, by the London agent, in the coupé, a part of the modern French diligence as convenient as an English post-chaise; and we left Calais at eight in the morning of the 27th, to go to Paris by Beauvais. This journey was as dull and uninteresting as usual; and at six in the evening of the 28th we arrived in Paris.

At the messagerie, the active commissionaire of the Hôtel de Mars persuaded us to take up our residence at this hotel; where we were detained four days waiting for the arrival of our passports from Calais, and for their receiving the necessary signatures of the British, Austrian, Sar-

dinian, and Swiss ambassadors : it is not possible in one, and very difficult in two days, to get them signed by all. It is only during two or three hours in a day that this necessary duty is fulfilled by them ; and these hours are the same with all the ambassadors. It is said that this is a piece of conventional policy, agreed upon by them, to gain time for inquiry into the characters of the travellers.

We left Paris at five in the evening of the 1st of August, by the diligence, for Chalons-sur-Saône. We reached Sens early the next morning. The first daylight muster of our party was a motley exhibition ; and the envelopment of heads and throats in shawls and handkerchiefs presented the appearance of a party travelling in a hospital-waggon. We had engaged the banquette or imperial ; the most independent, pleasant, and economical part of a French diligence. Within, whether alone, or with five companions, the French traveller always closes the windows ; and suffocation or a quarrel befalls the unlucky Englishman who has the misfortune to be cooped up in the diligence. Without, we had fresh air and freedom, and the benefit of the society of Monsieur le Conducteur, the chronicle of the road. He has usually *served* ; and fights his battles over again, with more gesture and as much truth as a Chelsea pensioner. He is a



great man in his way; nods with a certain air to those who are complimented by the distinction; and flirts *en passant* with the *grisettes*. These men are often well informed, and are generally amusing. On the second day our conducteur gave place to a young man whom we took up on the road, a Venetian Carbonaro, a fine young officer, who had served under Napoleon, and had been severely wounded at Waterloo. He had spent ten months with the late Queen Caroline in Italy; and on her trial had visited England as a volunteer witness for her. His means, poor fellow, were scanty; and he had walked the greater part of the way from England, to meet his mother by appointment in Switzerland. In his wretched country he was proscribed for his participation in the attempts made in 1821 to emancipate Lombardy from the thralldom of Austria; and he repaid the distinction with ten thousand curses upon the Austrians and the Holy Alliance. His society made an otherwise tedious journey to Dijon pass pleasantly: his conversation was full of anecdote; and his gay spirits, except when an Austrian agony crossed them, furnished us with amusement.

At Tonnerre, celebrated for its wines, we were pressed to take a bottle by the master of the hotel, who charged us four francs for what we afterwards learned our conducteur would have paid

twelve sous. We dined at *midnight* at Montbard ; where there is a château celebrated as the birth-place of Buffon the naturalist. On the third day we reached Dijon, where we staid three hours, and then proceeded to Chalons-sur-Saône through the Côte d'Or. Half our journey this day lay through vineyards, stretching from the plains up the sides of the hills which we skirted on our route, and presenting a richness of cultivation which compensated for the absence of the picturesque. We drank delicious Burgundy at the *Clos de Vougeôt*, the most celebrated vineyard in this country. It is a walled enclosure, which formerly belonged to the abbey of Cîteaux, the spire of which place we saw from the road. This vineyard, which is very small, is reported to yield 250,000 francs a-year profit : if all the bibbers of this wine pay for it as we did, seven francs a bottle, this is not improbable. We had, in our change of travellers at Dijon, taken up a pompous middle-aged militaire, whose calling had ceased with his master's (Napoleon) : he favoured us with occasional information on the road, but always delivered it with the conceit of one whose nose Queen Mab had traversed with a marshal's bâton. We were indebted to him for noticing, as we passed, the Clos de Vougeôt, Nuits, Baune, Pomard, Volney, and other places that gave names to the wines which we remembered in the cartés of the restau-

rateurs in Paris. At Nuits our companion pointed out a house from which a notary had been lately banished for ten years, for having struck a justice of the peace who had given a decision against his client.

It was nine in the evening before we reached Chalons-sur-Saône, where a table-d'hôte supper awaited us, at which a well-dressed boy, whose grin and looks defied description, ate till he was ill, bolting mouthful half as big as his head, with the claws and gestures of a young cannibal: his resemblance to the urchin in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" was forcibly recalled to me by my friend's exclamation of "*Lost, lost, lost!*"

*August 5th.*—A wet day, and the necessity of staying until the evening for the coche d'eau, have created a hearty disgust towards Chalons-sur-Saône. My companion has another reason for detesting it. Last night I was awoke by a strong smell of whisky, and a thousand muttered maledictions from the next room. Upon inquiring the cause, my friend said, that he had been assailed by a legion; and springing from the bed in a state of torment, groped about and found a leather bottle of whisky which he had brought from England, and sprinkled himself; an experiment to repel the enemy.

*6th.*—We left Chalons last night about ten, and got over the early part of the voyage in a

crowded dirty cabin. About five in the morning we reached Macon, where we landed for half an hour and took coffee; from Macon the scenes down the river increased in interest, and their rapid succession gave a charm to the passage—towns, villages, and châteaux, crowded the banks, or speckled the vineyards near the river; yet, during the fury of the revolution, upwards of one hundred and sixty châteaux were destroyed within this district. From many points the views were beautiful; and as a fine day brought the passengers on deck, the varieties of costume and character enlivened the party. The women of Macon wear a very small black hat, not larger than that of a doll, stuck on their caps; the largest is not more than six inches across, including the brim; it makes a grotesque appearance.

There was a sort of establishment on board for spoiling appetites. We witnessed, yet partook of the cookery; but hunger is not often delicate. The fowls appeared, to use a common joke of the French, to have died of chagrin; they had all been boiled for soup, and were now ready for fricassee or roasting—those who preferred the latter were soon accommodated; the chicken was put into a flat saucepan with a little butter, and soon burnt brown enough to pass for *poulet rôti*. Excellent wine and bread, and moderate charges, were among the *agréments* of the voyage. We rested

for a few minutes at Trévaux—passed the picturesque Ile-barbe; and shortly after, entered the busy city of Lyons, where we were taken to the custom-house and examined, to see whether we had attempted to violate a municipal right—a duty on spirits: this was the excuse for examining every traveller's trunk, and almost his pockets, for concealed brandy.

7th.—We enjoyed last evening, and again to-day, a splendid view of Mont Blanc. It is very seldom that this mountain, and Lyons, and the intervening distance of about one hundred and twenty miles, possess that clearness of atmosphere which is essential to seeing the monarch of the Alps from this city; but the nearer ranges are rarely so clouded, but that the Lyonnois can point out what they think will do as well—one of the snowy peaks of the Dauphiny Alps—which it is a common trick to pass for Mont Blanc upon the English, who fail not, after a reference to their guide-books, which announce the possibility of viewing Mont Blanc from Lyons, to inquire after that object which many have left England principally to visit. Its form, however, is so peculiar, that no one can be deceived who has once seen Mont Blanc from the Jura side. When seen from Lyons, its insulated appearance and known distance give a sublime impression of its magnitude.

8th.—We have spent more time at Lyons than

we intended; but its picturesque situation, its manufactures, and its public establishments, deserve attention: my stay of a fortnight in 1821 made me well acquainted with these. We have been exploring and sketching, and have visited the Palais des Arts et de Commerce, the public gardens and library, the ruins of the fortifications, and the hill of Sainte Marie Fourvières, where one of the finest views of the city is presented: it lies below the observer, with its quays swept by those magnificent rivers, the Rhone and the Saône; and far beyond, the eye stretches over the broad and fertile valley of the former to the range of the Jura Mountains; towering above these, we still saw Mont Blanc.

A building of a remarkable form—a pyramid—is seen on the Brotteaux, a plain on the left bank of the Rhone, where shows and guinguettes are great sources of attraction to the vulgar. This pyramid is a church, erected in memory of two hundred and ten victims to revolutionary fury, who were shot together on the spot where the church now stands, and which bears the name of the *Champ de douleur*.

About two miles below the city, a walk through a long avenue, between the Rhone and the Saône, leads to the finest view of Lyons, near the Pont de Mulatière, which crosses the Saône, and terminates the avenue near the confluence of this river with the Rhone. From the rocks and hills

on this part of the right bank of the Saône, the prospect of Lyons is the most picturesque of a hundred points of view. A road hence leads back by the Saône to the city. No visitor to Lyons should fail to make an excursion to the confluence of its rivers.

On our return to the Hôtel du Parc, we observed a crowd assembled around a scaffold in the Place de Terreaux, the scene of criminal punishment, where, after the siege of Lyons in 1793, fifteen hundred victims were immolated by the worshippers of the Goddess of Reason! At present there was no guillotine on the scaffold; but a post, to which a culprit, a woman, was fastened and exposed: her name, crime, and sentence, were written on a placard above her head, and the spectators informed by it, that she was Lauretta Petit, twenty-eight years of age, and a widow, who, for participation in a fraudulent bankruptcy, was condemned to one hour's exposure, and five years' imprisonment with hard labour. If such a punishment were applied to the crime in England, I fear that the frequent occasion for its exhibition would destroy the intended effect; it might, however, be tried.

We have arranged for our departure by the Geneva diligence to-day at four o'clock: it goes by Nantua—a route which I highly enjoyed in 1821. We have reckoned with surprise, that the actual

cost of our conveyance from London to Geneva will scarcely exceed five guineas each, though we travelled from Calais to Paris in the coupé of the *Hirondelle* — a piece of unnecessary extravagance. In London we each paid 2*l.* 19*s.* to be set down in Paris; from Paris to Chalons-sur-Saône, 39 francs; thence by the *coche d'eau* to Lyons, 7 francs; and from Lyons to Geneva we have paid 12 francs.

9*th.* — The route from Lyons to Geneva is very beautiful and interesting. After passing the fauxbourgs of Lyons, the road emerges from long avenues, and for many miles ascends the right bank of the Rhone. On looking back, the city of Lyons is seen lying beneath the hills, which, except towards the Rhone, surround it, and continues in sight almost to Mirabel, whence the route lies through an open, cultivated country. After passing Pont d'Ain, the road enters among the hills, which at Cerdon appear to prevent further progress, by closing in around the deep dell in which this little town is situated; the traveller emerges, however, by an excellent road, which presents some picturesque scenes as it winds up the hill above Cerdon to the next post-house of Maillac, and thence to Nantua, a town embosomed with its little lake amidst rocks and mountains. An excellent inn at Nantua, abundantly supplied, especially with fish from the lake, makes it a



convenient half-way resting-place between Lyons and Geneva. From Nantua, the road, after crossing a hill, winds through a valley which recalls the scenery of Cumberland, as it passes the borders of the little lakes near Saint Germain de Joux, but increases in wildness as it skirts a deep ravine by Chatillon, and presents a succession of scenes of romantic beauty.

Near Bellegarde is the Perte du Rhone, an object of interest to the traveller; but he would find it impossible to arrive at it without the attendance of a troop of dirty and beggarly ciceroni, whose clamour and importunity cannot be described. The sudden narrowing of the Rhone, and its disappearance into the caverns through which it passes for a short distance, are remarkable features in this scenery; but a gorge more appalling is seen from the bridge at Bellegarde, where the river Versline foams 120 feet below the road, amidst rocks which are perforated in a singular manner by the action of the water.

From Bellegarde the road ascends, and some magnificent views are presented to the traveller; and in descending again to Fort d'Ecluse, occasional peeps are caught into the deep ravine through which the Rhone escapes from the mountain barrier of the Jura. Fort d'Ecluse is constructed on the precipitous side of the gorge which the Rhone has here cut through the rocks, and

which river the fort overhangs many hundred feet; it completely defends the approach to France by this road. Soon after passing the fort, Mont Blanc bursts upon the view of the traveller, and continues the chief feature in the scenes which extend to Geneva across a richly cultivated plain. Here we have taken up our quarters at the Ecu de Genève, with our rooms on the lake side of the establishment—much the pleasantest, which we obtained, with a little coaxing, from our host.

An Englishman is struck at Geneva with the prevalence of his language: he hears it from half the persons who pass him in the street; and at the inn it almost produces the illusion that he is still in England. I confess that it gives me pleasure to hear it spoken. I am not one of those who, with a canting utterance of dislike in a foreign country to the sound of their mother tongue, affect to avoid it. I am sure that among the English who travel, many are acute observers, who, by communicating their knowledge to such of their countrymen as have known how to appreciate the opportunity, have imparted more information than could have been obtained from other sources. The booby who seeks distinction by expressing loudly his dislike to his countrymen and their language, is, almost without exception, one who relies upon the courtesy of the stranger to pardon his common-

*As an  
instance  
of this friendly  
feeling for  
his Country-  
men see  
p. 136.*

place remarks in bad French, and obtain a lesson gratis.

10th.—Bought a musical box at Aubert's, in the Rue de la Machine. I recollected that on a former occasion the music of one of these beautiful instruments recalled vividly the scenes in which I first heard it; and in anticipation of this pleasure I shall take one into the mountains. We provided ourselves also with sacks to wear over the shoulders, leather bottles, and other things necessary for our journey; all which can be readily procured here.

## CHAPTER II.

Enter Savoy, Bonneville—Progress of the King of Sardinia—  
 Servoz—Chamouny—Montanvert—Col de Vosa—Contam-  
 mines—Notre Dame de la Gorge—Col du Bon-homme,  
 Chapiu—Col de Seigne—Allée Blanche—Glacier of the  
 Brèva—Courmayeur.

*August 11th.*—Left Geneva at seven o'clock, for Saint Martin's; we should have started earlier, but the man who agreed last night to take us for eighteen francs did not make his appearance, though he promised to call us at half-past four. The rascal probably sold us for a better job. On our arrival at Bonneville, we found the new King of Sardinia there, on a progress through his territories; he was received by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and served by them as a guard of honour. The houses were hung with festoons of moss and flowers, and decorated with blue flags, having a white cross upon them: large temporary arches had been erected; and the splendour of the scene was doubtless very striking to the bewildered loyalty of the worthy Savoyards. I cannot say that we felt the presence very awful—Englishmen fail sadly in their notions of the dig-

nity of any kind except their own. We reached Saint Martin's at five; the mountains were cloudless, and Mont Blanc shone splendidly: there is no spot from which it appears to so much advantage as at the bridge of Saint Martin's, whence it is seen in all its beauty and vastness. The heat to-day has been excessive.

*char à cote* 12th.—Went in a char-à-banc, a sort of carriage like a sofa placed on wheels, to the baths of St. Gervais. This is so little out of the usual route, by Chede, and so pleasant a *détour*, that all visitors to Chamouny should go or return by it; it is a little fairy spot, in a beautiful valley, where excellent accommodation may be had *en pension*, hot mineral baths for the sick, and delightful walks around this little paradise for the convalescent. At the back of the house, a little way up the glen, there is a fine cataract; and one of the pleasures of this place is its solitude, amidst scenes so beautiful and wild, that it would be difficult to find it without a guide. After breakfasting there, we crossed the valley of the Arve to Chede, and proceeded by the usual route to Servoz, where we refreshed our mules, and enjoyed the delicious bread, honey, and milk, with which we were served. The hostess looked as if the world had smiled upon her since 1821. A new house had been built, with excellent accommodations for travellers; for many, in visiting the mountains

around Mont Blanc, start from this place for the Buet; and good guides for the excursion are found here. I was amused upon being immediately recognised by mine hostess, as the Englishman who, three years before, had been indebted to her for a coarse needle and worsted to make a temporary repair of his clothes, torn in a flourishing descent from a mule. This performance as tailor took place in the presence of the Crown Princess of Denmark and her suite, who were then travelling *incog.*: they had come in thoroughly drenched from a storm which they had encountered in their descent that morning from Chamouny. Jupiter Pluvius had been regardless of rank; and if the pelting was to prove the princess's temper, she came off triumphantly; I cannot pay this compliment to some of her draggie-tailed and unhappy suite.

Close to the new inn at Servoz there is now established, for the sale of the plants and minerals of Mont Blanc, a shop, where the dealers, like those at Chamouny, sell the productions of other countries, however distant, as specimens from *around* Mont Blanc.

The deep gorge above Pont Pellisier, on the road to Chamouny, is one of the finest spots in these mountains, and is particularly impressive upon the traveller who makes his first approach to the great chain of the Alps by this route. The first view of the glaciers can never realise the expecta-

tions of any visitor. That of Bossons appears like a small white mass protruded into the valley; but its magnitude is relative: the enormous scale of the surrounding objects, far beyond those which the eye has been practised in measuring,—except it be that of an Alpine mountaineer,—deceives the observer; and it is only when he approaches close to the Glacier of Bossons, that a true idea can be formed of the grandeur of these magnificent masses.

On entering Chamouny, I recognised my old guide Michael Balma: on inquiry, we learnt that he was engaged for to-morrow; but as we shall stay a day at Chamouny, I have promised to employ him as our guide to Courmayeur; he will go to Martigny, and return to-morrow. We have put up at the Hôtel de Londres, where, on a former occasion, I and my family met with great attention and civility.

13th. — We were annoyed this morning, on finding that we were not allowed to take a guide for this day only, in order to receive the services of Michael Balma to-morrow. By the regulations of the guides, we cannot dismiss one, and take another, without just complaint against him: we therefore determined to ascend the Montanvert without a guide. On starting, a boy, who had undertaken to carry our sketching apparatus, was met by the guide-en-chef, who drove him back,

and threatened him with punishment for accompanying us. I had been on the Montanvert before, and anticipated no difficulty in going without a director; but it was not long before an attempt at a short cut bewildered us, and we were indebted to a boy, who was gathering strawberries, for being led into the right path again: for this civility, the boy was scolded by some guides who met us ascending the mountain. I am not sure that we bore with patience this tyrannous interference,—it was evidently of less moment to them that our necks should be broken, than that the laws of Chamouny should be infringed. Thus, because I had chosen the services of a particular guide, whose skill and care I was acquainted with, we were refused the assistance of any other, or even mules, for the day.

The path to the Montanvert has now been made practicable for mules the whole way. We descended on the Mer de Glace; the emotions excited by the objects which surround the observer in this situation cannot be described,—their vastness oppresses the mind.

I was interested in marking the progress of a large block of granite, which, lying on the glacier, had advanced with it, descending towards the source of the Arveron, nearly a mile, since 1821. On returning to the house, dedicated *A la nature*, on the Montanvert, we found a pleasant party of



young German officers, who were in the course of a pedestrian tour in Switzerland and Savoy. Their health, spirits, and gaiety, would have driven a hypochondriac mad.

On our descent, we observed indications of an approaching storm, and were fortunate enough to reach our inn before it burst upon the valley. A vast dense cloud hung upon the Breven, throwing a shadow upon the mountain side as black as night; the effect was sublime. Soon after our return, the storm began, darkness closed around us with an intenseness increased by the vivid lightning, which, when it burst on the clouds and mountains, lit them up in the most terrific manner. The thunder reverberated with an effect peculiar to a storm in the High Alps; and we enjoyed its grandeur with much the same feelings as a traveller enjoys his good fortune when, during his visit to Naples, he witnesses an eruption of Vesuvius.

14th.—The night was so stormy, that we decided upon staying for the clearing up of the weather, before we ventured across the Bonhomme. We walked in the morning to the source of the Arveron, where I was surprised at the change of appearance in the arch of the glacier whence the river issues. Three years since, its span was nearly two hundred feet; now it was diminished to fifty, and its height not more than

twenty feet. Whilst we looked on, a large mass of ice fell from the roof. All the glaciers in this valley have diminished since 1821; that of the Bossons protrudes less by two hundred feet into the valley than it did at that time.

On our return to the Hôtel de Londres, our guide, Michael Balma, advised our crossing the Col de Vosa, and reaching Contamines to-day. He thought that the weather had cleared up; but there was little weather-wisdom in Michael's advice, as we have been thoroughly drenched in our passage. About twelve o'clock we started on mules, and soon after passing the village of Ouches, began to ascend. The storm of last night had destroyed the paths and road in some places, particularly where the torrents from the mountain dashed across the route, and we saw groups of people, principally women, actively employed, felling young trees, making up banks, and repairing the injuries: a priest, with folded arms, encouraged them to labour—*by his presence*. The women had fastened their petticoats so oddly about their legs, that the dress appeared like the trousers of a Greek galiongee.

The weather, which by holding up had decoyed us on our journey, now threatened us again; and we had not attained half the summit of the Vosa before the clouds rapidly enveloped us, and spoilt the view of the valley of Chamouny, which from

this pass is celebrated. Our ascent by a tortuous path up the side of the mountain was in one place very striking, from the steepness of the ascent and zig-zag course of the road. The foremost mule appeared to the rider of the second to be placed on a dangerous shelf above him; and the effect was frightful, of seeing the sky beneath the belly of the upper mule, though the animals were only a few feet apart. The remainder of the ascent to the Col de Vosa was in a dense cloud. On reaching a *châlet*, we procured some milk from an old woman who resided in it, less, she said, to make butter and cheese—the usual occupation of the inhabitants of these wretched hovels in the summer—than induced by poverty to take up her residence there whilst it was endurable. Our descent from the col was over a slaty path, upon which we frequently slipped, for it was too dangerous to continue on our mules; and though rain still fell, before we reached the torrent which descends from the glaciers of Bionassey, we found ourselves below the clouds. The torrent was swollen by the rain, and, tumbling with violence over the rocks, appeared to bar all further progress. We here remounted, and our guide pointed out where we should force the mules to enter the torrent, whilst he went further up, to where, with the help of his pole, and leaping from rock to rock, he was able to cross to us.

The undertaking to ford it with our mules was apparently one of the greatest danger. With some difficulty I made my mule enter the water; and though the beast sunk sometimes to the saddle between the rocks, which formed the bed of the torrent, I crossed safely; my friend followed; and we could not suppress our wonder at the firm and sure-footed character of our mules. Michael Balma soon overtook us. We had not left the ford a quarter of an hour, before we met an English gentleman and lady, travelling on mules, without a guide, and thoroughly drenched. They said they had left Chapiu that morning, had crossed the Bon-homme, and, after quarrelling with their guide at Contamines, had proceeded alone to Chamouny. We sent back Michael Balma to assist the lady across the torrent, whilst we proceeded to Contamines. The rain increased; and though occasional glimpses only were caught of the scenery through which we passed, it was enough to assure us of how much of the grandeur and beauty of our route we lost by the unfavourable state of the weather. We reached Contamines at six o'clock, thoroughly soaked. A good fire, refreshment, and active attention, soon restored us to comfort and good humour.

15th.—We thought the weather too doubtful to cross the mountains to-day, as the object of our journey would be defeated if we could neither see

the country nor sketch; but we rode on in the valley to the little church of Notre Dame de la Gorge. It was a fête, and people of the surrounding country in their holyday dresses made the scene a gay one: they come from villages ten or twelve hours distant to this fête. We recognised in the assembly a pretty girl who had waited upon us at the baths of St. Gervais. The church is situated in a little nook at the foot of Mont Jovet, or Montjoie, close to the gorge whence the torrent of the Bourant issues. The gay dresses of the peasantry were strikingly contrasted with the singular seclusion and solitude of this little spot. We were fortunate in having this relief to the tedium of our delay at Contamines. In the evening we rode down to the village of Bionnay. The valley is highly cultivated, and very beautiful.

16th.—The morning, for which we had waited patiently, assured by our guide that it would be a fine day, whistled its *entrée* at our windows, with an accompaniment of clouds and rain. Detention at an inn by bad weather has, I believe, been often described; but by none, I think, so well as my friend “Geoffry Crayon,” in his little tale of the “Stout Gentleman.” We looked out at five o’clock, again at half-past six, seven, and eight,—no prospect of its ceasing to pour; nor were the mountains visible; and to see them

had brought us seven hundred miles from home. At length we ordered breakfast. In the *salle à manger* we discovered a barometer: chairs were instantly mounted; but we found that the scale was fixed only with a pin, and the impatient observer might at will indicate the atmospheric pressure at  $30^{\circ}$  or  $31^{\circ}$ —but, alas! the sunshine would not follow. Ten o'clock came; a bit of blue sky was seen—it was transient; the peasant girls still wore their upper petticoats turned up and tied over their heads. We worked, to pass the time, upon some sketches, and spoilt them. We were not in the humour for happy efforts.

Some travellers who had reached Contamines last evening determined to start to-day for the *Allée Blanche*, and their preparation gave us hope; they were of opinion that the weather would clear off before mid-day. They started at eleven; the vapours of the sky soon afterwards dispersed, and ours with them; and with a fairer prospect of fine weather, we left Contamines at one o'clock. Our route lay again through the valley to *Notre Dame de la Gorge*; but leaving the little dell in which the church is situated on our right, we ascended by a steep and rugged path formed with large stones. This road brought us to the *châlets* of *Nant Bourant*. Before our arrival there, Michael took us to see the cataract of the *Bourant*; it is near the path, but can only be

viewed from above. In its descent it swept round an angle in the rocks, which increased its noise and violence. We afterwards heard rather than saw the torrent, from the bridge of Nant Bourant, forcing its way at a vast depth beneath us. After passing the châlets, a rough path brought us through a pine-forest to a rich pasturage belonging to the châlets of Mont Jovet: these are situated on a small plain bearing the name of the mountain, at which we rested our mules, and obtained some delicious milk, whilst we enjoyed the fine prospect of the valley we had traversed, rich in pasturages and forests. Thousands of magnificent pines here decay, that cannot be employed for want of roads by which to carry them from these mountains: the peasant who needs a tree for building pays only twenty sous for one, selecting it where he pleases; and if for firewood, eight sous. For the pasturage of five cows in the mountains, eight francs are paid for the season.

From the châlets we ascended by a steep and dangerous path that overhung a very deep declivity; and in one of our windings on this ridge the mules' hoofs were within a foot of the brink, beneath which, at the depth of three or four hundred feet, a torrent falling from a great height dashed across a chasm, above which our path lay. Our feelings were appalled, in spite of the preparation we had received, in our journey

hither, from the scenes of wildness and danger through which we had passed. As we ascended, the savageness of the route increased. We had long left the forests below us; and the rhododendron was the largest shrub that we saw on the *Plan des Dames*. In the centre of this little plain is a heap of stones, to which our guide, with a sort of sacred feeling, desired each of us to add one—a duty, he said, which every passing traveller performed towards the wild tomb of a lady of rank (tradition, of course, says a princess), who, with her suite, was overwhelmed here in a storm she encountered in crossing these mountains. We complied with this Celtic custom, paid our tribute, and continued our ascent. We soon crossed some beds of snow, and reached what, from the valley of Mont Jovet, we thought to be the Col de Bon-homme, but it was the Col de Gauche. The strange and rugged forms of two of the pinnacles of rock bear the names of the Bon-homme and the Femme du Bon-homme. The name of the pass is said, and with great probability, to be derived from a humane individual who formerly established a place of refuge here for the travellers who had occasion to traverse the mountain. From the cross on this summit the view down the valley which we had ascended was strikingly beautiful, to where it was terminated by Mont Varens, the pinnacled heights above the



village of St. Martin's, near Sallenche. From the extremity of the valley the eye traced the course of its ascent through its cultivated portion, yellow with corn, to the pines, châlets, and pasturages. Above these the bare and rugged mountains ended in scathed peaks, glaciers, and eternal snow.

Our route, after passing the Col de Gauche, lay on the left, behind the Bon-homme; and we had still an hour's ascent over a path less dangerous, but rendered more difficult by rocks and torrents. We descended from our mules, by the advice of our guide, and scrambled our way to the summit, a spot marked by a cross, 7900 English feet above the level of the sea. Here two paths were open to us, one by the Col de Fours, which was the shortest and most difficult; the other by Chapiu: we decided upon the latter, because Michael had heard one of the party who had started before us from Contamines state their intention to cross by the Col de Fours, and there was not accommodation enough for another party at the châlets de Motet, to which that road led. The view, looking into the valley of Beaufort, on the south of the Bon-homme, is very fine, where the range of mountains between the Tarentaise and the Maurienne bound in their vastness and distance the extraordinary panorama presented on this pass, the first that we have seen from such a situation, and it is impossible to imagine one more sublime.

On our descent to Chapiu a singularly beautiful object presented itself—a mountain in the direction of the Vanoise was seen towering over the lower ranges of the Tarentaise : it seemed to be an enormous pyramid of snow ; its angles, sharply defined, were brightly illuminated by the setting sun : it was an object so beautiful, that once seen it can never be forgotten. After a fatiguing descent of two hours and a half on foot, across torrents, bogs, and other obstacles, we reached the châlets of Chapiu, a group of a dozen stone hovels in a savage glen. We entered one of these, which was patronised by our guide. Hospitality sold here, was indicated by a bush of rhododendron tied to a stick, and kept on the gable by the weight of some stones ; it was not a sign of wine, for none was to be had there, but it was a hint for *eau de vie*. Michael had provided wine and bread, &c. at Contamines. The hovel of which we took possession consisted of two dens, miscalled chambers, the outer one, “ serving for kitchen, for parlour, and hall,” was about five feet wide and ten feet long, with a fire-place at one end, but no chimney. The sleeping-room contained three miserable couches, a long table on trestles in the centre, and two forms of the same length. At the end was the only window in this the chief hotel of Chapiu ; it contained four very small panes of glass when fitted in, but this was only on

company occasions, two bars of iron crossed being the usual check against rats or weasels, for nothing larger could enter. A small lamp, of classic form, rendered the darkness visible, but scarcely enabled us to see that our dormitory had been recently fitted up for the travelling season. This discovery I accidentally made by thrusting my fingers into the yet soft mud and lime with which the walls were plastered. Here, however, we had brought good appetites and great fatigue: the first gave a relish to delicious milk and eggs; and the second, soon after, gave us up, wrapt in our cloaks, to sound sleep on the coarse palliasses.

17th. — We might have slept till doomsday if we had slept until the light from our six-inch window had awakened us; but Michael's bustle to light a fire smoked and roused us. We found him putting our boots in the best possible order for our journey with *cirage à la Chapiu*—butter. This was necessary, after the soaking which they had received in the snow and torrents. A breakfast of toasted bread in delicious milk prepared us for our journey; and six francs, her demand, satisfied our hostess.

Our route lay up the valley of the torrent, which rises in the Glacier del Oratoire, on the south-east side of Mont Blanc. The path was rugged and difficult; no living sound was heard except that of the marmot, whose shrill whistle

occasionally disturbed the deep sense of solitude with which the mind of the traveller is oppressed in his first visit to these alpine regions. Yet there was a spirit, a vivacity, excited by the cool freshness of the morning and the purity of the air that we breathed in, which is never felt in the same degree out of the mountains.

In about two hours we reached, by a rugged and difficult path, the Hameau de Glacier, and soon after the châteaux of Motet. Like Chapiu, this place generally divides the journey from Chamouny to Courmayeur, and is the place of rest for those who pass by the Col du Fours; the route is shorter than by Chapiu, but the col is higher by a thousand feet than that of the Bon-homme, and the path more difficult. Here we met the party setting out for Courmayeur which had yesterday left Contamines before us. Upon describing and comparing our accommodations, we had reason to be pleased with the *comforts* of our *hostelrie* at Chapiu; at Motet neither candle nor lamp could be procured.

From these châteaux the ascent to the Col de la Seigne is very steep and fatiguing; and in one place the idea of danger was strongly excited by our guide, who lay on his back towards the mountain slope, where a very narrow path skirted a precipice, and held our coats until the mules were beyond the point of danger. The path wa

slippery, from the wet and loose slate of which it was composed; but the precaution was appalling, and, I think, unnecessary; though we certainly could not see the bottom of the valley immediately beneath us as we passed this spot.

After ascending about an hour and a half from Motet, we attained the summit of the Col de la Seigne, about 8000 feet, where an alpine view of extraordinary magnificence burst upon us. We looked upon Mont Blanc, and along the course of the valleys which divide Piemont from the Valais, and extend nearly thirty miles on the eastern side of its enormous mass, through the Allée Blanche, the Val Veni, and the Val d'Entrèves, to the Col de Ferret. Two immense pyramids of rugged rock rear from the valley their scathed heads, and appear like guards to the "monarch of mountains;" beyond and below them lay the little lake of Combal, whence issues one of the sources of the Doira Baltea; and down the sides of Mont Blanc appeared to stream the glaciers of the Allée Blanche and the Miage; whilst the distant peaks which overhang the western side of this long valley or valleys (for different portions of it, from the Col de la Seigne to the Col de Ferret; bear different names) give a peculiarly grand and severe aspect to the scene: among these the Géant and the Grand Jorasse are distinguished. The eastern side of the valley is

formed by the Cramont, and a range of mountains which extend to the Col de Ferret, and terminate the vista in Mont Velan, and the masses which surround the pass of the Great St. Bernard. The summit of Mont Blanc was occasionally enveloped in clouds, and the changes which these produced upon the scene were often strikingly beautiful. Most travellers, whose expectations have been formed upon the descriptions in guide-books, are led to believe that the eastern side of Mont Blanc is one vast precipice, from the summit down to the Allée Blanche: it is certainly much more abrupt than towards the vale of Chamouny; but no such anticipation will be realised in the magnificent view from the Col de la Seigne.

From this col, leading across the great chain of the Alps, we began our descent over some beds of perpetual snow, which, lying on the northern side of the pass, remain unmelted. Though steep, these are not dangerous, as the feet sink two or three inches and give firmness to the step. Scarcely any melting takes place on the surface of the snow, unless where the soil has been washed over, or fallen so as to cover it. Generally, the snow melts below, in contact with the earth; and this is one of the causes of avalanches, where the mass which slips acquires momentum enough to rush on. Caution is generally necessary near the edges of these beds of

snow, where it is thin, lest the traveller should sink through, perhaps two or three feet. After a tedious descent to the first pasturage, at the base of the two immense pyramids which formed so striking a feature from the summit, we sat down upon the short and soft grass of the pasturage of the châteaux of the Allée Blanche, to rest the mules and ourselves, and took refreshment, which we had brought with us. The life and spirit of such enjoyment as this is only known to alpine travellers. The sward around us was enamelled with beautiful flowers: of these, the broad patches of the deep blue gentian were the richest in colour; the alpine ranunculus, and a hundred other varieties, embellished the place where we rested; being surrounded by, and in the immediate vicinity of, the loftiest mountains in Europe.

Soon after leaving this delightful spot, we skirted the little lake of Combal by a very narrow and dangerous path. The mule on which my friend rode attempted, in order to exhibit his obstinacy or his courage, to turn upon this narrow way; but there not being sufficient room, his tail overhung the water, whilst his fore feet were resting in a nearly erect posture against the rocks which bordered the lake: a blow from Michael was the only applause that he received for his feat, and he then wisely and safely resumed his route. After passing the lake at the lower ex-

tremity across an embankment of great thickness and strength, the path descends on the left side of the torrent, which struggles with horrid violence in continued cataracts down the ravine for several miles, particularly where, in passing by the glacier of Miage, our route lay amidst rocks and stones, the detritus of the mountain, brought down by the glacier, of which it concealed the base and sides. The ice being covered by the stones and soil, the path was so dangerous that we followed the advice of our guide, and descended from our mules. We were occupied nearly two hours in passing this *moraine*, as the guides here call these terminations of the glaciers. Sometimes we were at the water's edge, at others on a pathless ridge, some hundreds of feet above the Doire, walking over loose stones, and these rendered less secure by the numerous streams which, falling from the heights above us, crossed our path to increase the torrent foaming beneath. At length we escaped from this fatiguing part of our route, and entered the beautiful meadows of the Val Veni, that are separated from the Val d'Entrèves by a high ridge which skirts the forest of St. Nicolas. There are no *châlets* in the Val Veni, but several *granges*, in which the great quantities of hay made in the meadows and slopes of this valley are stored.

The forest of Saint Nicolas, which we traversed on our way to Courmayeur, is opposite to some



extensive buildings at the foot of the Glacier de Brenva: formerly these were occupied by miners, who prepared the lead and copper ores raised near this place; but the expenses having exceeded the profits, these buildings are now falling to decay. Across the valley we saw the beautiful glacier of Brenva appearing through the enormous larches and pines of the forest, presenting to us a scene deservedly esteemed one of the finest in the Alps. We now rapidly descended by a narrow road which fearfully overhangs the lower range of the glacier of the Brenva, whose sides were covered with masses of granite and rocks of great magnitude. The torrent which we had seen rushing through the valley passed beneath the glacier, and reappeared increased by a stream, which issued from an arch at the termination of the glacier, like that of the Arveron in the Vale of Chamouny.

In the valley below us lay the village of Entrèves; and towering high above it, on our left, were the Géant and its pass, over which Mrs. Campbell and her daughter, with a party of guides, had lately travelled from Chamouny to Courmayeur. The road improved as we approached the latter place; and we soon got into excellent quarters at the Albergo dell' Angela.

## CHAPTER III.

Courmayeur — La Salle — Accommodation at the Hôtel à la Rose — Aosta — Val d'Aosta — Chatillon — Val Tournanche.

*August 18th.*—We found our accommodation here far superior to what we had expected. Many Piemontese during the season visit the baths and mineral springs of Courmayeur. A good table d'hôte is served at the Angela; and the sublime scenery of the neighbourhood (easily accessible in short excursions) renders a brief visit to Courmayeur, in the month of August, a source of great pleasure. My recollection of the magnificent view of the glacier of the Brenva, from the forest of St. Nicolas, induced me to return to it to-day to make a drawing of the scene. Whilst I was engaged, the silence of these solitudes was very impressive: it was broken only at long intervals by the distant thunder of the avalanches falling from the glacier, whose sharp, bright, and enormous masses, seen across the valley, bade defiance to conjecture upon its distance; it was four or five times as far off as it appeared to be; and the immense *moraine*, which took the course of the

valley when it left that of the glacier on the mountain, extended more than a league towards Courmayeur. The soil which lay on its sides nourished the roots of enormous pines, and concealed the ice upon which it rested.

Few inhabited situations are so sublime as Courmayeur. Mont Blanc, and the vast peaks which rise on its Piemontese side, are, in appearance, so immediately above the town, that from the street they excite an appalling impression by their height and proximity; all the surrounding objects are so enormous, that those by which we usually estimate magnitude dwindle into utter insignificance.

We left Courmayeur about three o'clock, to descend the valley of Aosta; our route lay on the left bank of the Doire. We soon passed the valley on the right which leads through Pré St. Didier to the pass of the Little St. Bernard. In our descent to Morges we observed many of the enormous chestnut-trees for which this valley is celebrated, and already found the vine cultivated. We had intended to rest at Morges; but the auberge was too unpromising, and we proceeded to La Salle.\* Here a fat and filthy landlady, breathing the sweets of eau de vie and garlic, welcomed us in a torrent of Piemontese jargon,

\* This village derives its name from the Salassi, who anciently inhabited the upper valley of Aosta.

in which there were neither French nor Italian words enough to enable us to understand her. We went up stairs; but the filth was so excessive, that my friend declared he would not remain here, but proceed to Villeneuve. This was a flourish; Villeneuve was four hours distant; and we had been led to expect beautiful scenery in this part of the valley, which we must have passed in the dark if we had proceeded; besides, Michael thought we had not much chance of better accommodation at Villeneuve. We submitted, therefore, but with a very ill grace, to receive the delicate attentions of our hostess, Madame *Sale*, as Michael called her in his efforts at a pun: her dirt destroyed our appetites; this perhaps, was fortunate, as she had nothing wherewith to gratify them. She was anxious, however, to know what we wished to have for supper, and offered us *any* thing; but, whatever we particularised was met by a shake of the head: at length we asked for trout from the Doire, and she delighted us by saying there was plenty of *poissons*;—there might have been in the river, but the supper served to two hungry travellers was *one* boiled trout just the length of my porte-crayon, and some boiled potatoes. We had wine, however, and bread. We asked for milk; but this was a luxury not to be procured at this season in the valley. After supper my companion and I tossed up for

the bed, as there was but one ; I, fortunately, lost, and got a palliasse thrown on the floor, on which I lay wrapt in my cloak ; my *lucky* friend who won the bed, which in form was like an old English one, had not taken possession of it ten minutes before he was welcomed by a legion, whose affectionate zeal drove him out to collect the chairs as a resting-place.

19th. — When we were called at five by Michael, all that remained of my friend was awake, and we prepared to start. Our landlady appeared in an interesting dishabille, and seemed to be very unhappy on learning, for *the first time*, that she had bugs in the house, and would have denied it but for the evidence which they had left on the face of my friend. Upon asking for our bill, she demanded, in her patois, *dodizy liri*. This Piemontese sum total, without details, did not include Michael's bill, who, cursing the old hag, said she had already been demanding four francs for his accommodations, though he had slept in the hay-loft—the pleasantest dormitory, by the by, in the Hôtel à la Rose. The villanous demand of twelve francs we determined to resist, and refused to pay even half the sum ; when our hostess tossed off a large glass of eau de vie, and placed her arms a-kimbo, as we thought to prepare for battle : however, on my putting down a five-franc piece, she seized it so greedily, as to excite

regret that we should have offered her so much ; a franc would have paid such expenses and services as we had incurred and received, with ample profit. Michael got off by paying two, and as much grumbling as he could throw into the bargain. At length we escaped, crossed our mules, and left, "*à la rose, bon logis.*" We afterwards learned that Madame Sale was one of the richest inhabitants in the valley ; a brother who died in America had left her above 40,000 francs—an immense sum here ; but the pill had not even then sufficient gilding ; she still remained in single blessedness.

On leaving the village of La Salle, the scene looking back upon Mont Blanc was magnificent ; the valley rich in wood and vines, and the old castle of La Salle on a peaked rock jutting from the mountain-side, presented a picture to which the clearness and tints of the morning gave splendour. We soon after crossed the river, where the mountains closed into a deep defile, and ascended to Fort Roc, a narrow pass so truly overhanging the deep ravine of the Doire, that the road was in two or three places carried on platforms across fissures in the mountain-side, many hundred feet above the river ; these, in case of invasion by this pass, might be removed, and thus effectually cut off all communication between the upper and the lower valleys. Our last view

of Mont Blanc was from this spot; and we congratulated ourselves that we had not proceeded last night, when these magnificent scenes must have been concealed from us; every turn in the road presented some new and beautiful point of view, or picturesque object—rocks, ravines, forests, and old châteaux, were the materials of the scenery, aided by the occasional extension of the valley into some beautiful little plain, always bounded by lofty mountains of magnificent forms. After passing the steep and dirty village of Ivrogne, we crossed the torrent which descends from the Iseran by the Val de Rema, thence we descended to Villeneuve, where we rested and procured an excellent breakfast of eggs, honey, sausages, chicken, wine, cheese, &c.: for this abundance the demand was 34 sous (17*d.*); a striking contrast with Madame *Sale's* fare and *dodizy liri*.

On leaving Villeneuve the route again crosses the Doire, and continues on the left bank of the river to Aosta. A little below Villeneuve the road passes by the village of St. Pierre, and leaves its old castle built on a rock on the left: it is one of the finest of the feudal remains in this valley. The route now lies through a wider plain, and many parts of it are well cultivated. Occasionally the road lies across the beds of detritus washed from the mountains by the winter torrents, which renders sterile all such spots as

it covers. The road is tolerably good, except in such places, and there its injuries are soon remedied.

After passing the château of Sarra, the valley becomes still wider, and the city of Aosta appears situated at the base of those mountains which lead to the pass of the Great St. Bernard. We took up our quarters at the Hôtel de la Poste, and then visited the Roman remains for which Aosta is celebrated. After the conquest of the Salassi, a people living on the confines of the Alps, who had harassed the Romans, by whom they were extirpated, Augustus rebuilt their city, gave it his own name, and established there 3000 soldiers from the prætorian cohorts. Inscriptions and ruins are found in various situations which attest its early importance: of these, an amphitheatre may be traced, a bridge, a triumphal arch in tolerable preservation, and a gateway of remarkable form, having two façades, with a quadrangle between them; each façade composed of three arches, the centre much the largest. There are other ruins, in which the antiquarian may indulge his fancy in speculations. We found our inn dirty and disagreeable; and our rest was broken by an intruder into the chamber of my companion, between whose room and my own, a door had been left open. In his there was another door, leading to a third chamber; this was slowly and suspi-



ciously opened by some one, who roused my friend. He called out to me for my pistols; the party retreated. Some time after, I was again disturbed; the mysterious visitor had again entered; but as I dreaded to comply with my companion's wish to let him have arms to fire upon the intruder, I got up, and with a convenient screw-bolt, such as every traveller should carry, fastened the door.

20th.—We learned this morning that the poor devil whom my friend would have shot, was a traveller like ourselves, whose fears of Messieurs les Anglais kept him awake and restless, with the dread that his throat might be cut by *us* before the morning.

We did not leave Aosta until nine o'clock, owing to the necessity of procuring a revision of our guide's passport, before he could proceed further down the valley. At a short distance from Aosta, the Château de Quart struck our attention from its picturesque appearance and commanding situation. We attained it by ascending the hill on our left, and enjoyed a delightful view of that part of the valley in which Aosta is situated. It lay spread out into a plain highly cultivated. The Turkish corn and the vines were luxuriant; the sides of the hills were clothed with forests of vast chestnut and walnut-trees; and beyond these appeared the glaciers and peaks of Mount Soana.

Every thing bore the air of the Italian side of the Alps. Pictures of souls suffering in purgatory were painted upon the little chapels, to stimulate the fears or the piety of passengers ; and a small box, strongly locked, was always near it, to receive the freedom from perdition, which may here be bought with the smallest coin in the realm offered the church. *Bon jour* was already exchanged for *salute* ; but it was offered by a race of beings generally stunted and diseased. Nowhere are goîtres and crétins more prevalent than in this beautiful valley. The peasantry appear squalid and filthy. Of the whole population in the neighbourhood of Aosta, one in fifty is a crétin ; and above half are more or less goïtred. Some of these are horrid objects. Tumours as large as their heads are appended to their throats, varying in number, size, and colour. The dirt, deformity, and imbecility of the inhabitants of this part of the valley, presented a scene so wretched, that it harrowed our feelings. Not a well-dressed or decent-looking person is to be met with : all bear marks of poverty, disease, and wretchedness ; and this too amidst scenes for which nature has done so much. Surrounded by mountains, and high in their own locality, we saw nothing of the lightness, activity, and high spirits of the mountaineer. Something weighs upon the people like a curse. Many conjectures have been offered

upon the cause of goîtres and crétinism. Labour, food, water, air, have all been offered in explanation ; but none of these account for it satisfactorily. The opinion of our guide was, that it was chiefly owing to the villanously dirty habits of the people most afflicted with it. He said that among the mountaineers this was the general opinion ; and though it sometimes descended in families, and often was observed in infancy, yet it might be traced to the filthy habits of preceding generations.

Perhaps the finest part of the valley of the Doire lies below Aosta : it abounds with châteaux in picturesque situations. Many of these are at great elevations ; others are situated on bold headlands or knolls, at the bases of the mountains ; some are on rocks, accessible only with great difficulty, and generally they are surrounded by the vast forest-trees of this valley. At Nuz there is a picturesque entrance by a gateway beneath the ruins of a château. Throughout this valley the fronts of the auberges have generally trellises of vines extending quite across the road, where travellers may rest and take refreshment, sheltered from the sun by the leaves and pendulous fruit which ripen beneath. These trellises are as picturesque as they are convenient.

We arrived at the Three Kings, chez Jean Guarda, at Chatillon, about six o'clock, and learnt,

with some vexation, that the glaciers of the Cervin, which we had hoped to cross, were reported to be impassable. We have resolved, however, to try to-morrow. Chatillon is situated in the valley of Aosta, at the opening of the Val Tournanche, which leads by the high pass of the Cervin into the Valais. The torrent which descends from the Cervin rushes into the Val d'Aosta through a frightful chasm. Across it a bridge of admirable construction is thrown, a single arch; and the gulf seen from its parapets is quite appalling. About 500 feet further down the ravine there are two old bridges, one built over the other. The lower arch, which still remains, is said to be a Roman work. About ten feet directly above this the second is built, and the high road of the valley formerly passed over it: it now only leads to a chapel and some vineyards. From the parapet of the new bridge, the view of the ravine, the old bridges, the Château d'Uselle, seen across the valley, and the mountains which divide the valleys of the Doire and the Orca, is very fine.

21st.—The falling-in of the glaciers of the Cervin, across which lies our route to the Valais, is an accident of very unusual occurrence; it is reported to have happened a week ago; and as no travellers had since descended from the pass, Jean Guarda considered our attempt as hopeless. We, however, procured another guide from Chatillon, and

ascended the Val Tournanche. The entrance was exceedingly wild and grand, through a forest of chestnuts, and amidst enormous blocks of serpentine which had fallen from the mountains on both sides. Sometimes the road skirted precipices above the torrent too deep for the eye to reach the waters. After ascending for some time, and occasionally crossing the river, the peak of the Cervin appeared over the mountains, which seemed to close the ascent of the valley; it rose like a pyramid of such vast magnitude, that I cannot describe the impression which it made upon us. At the village of Val Tournanche, where guides are usually taken to cross the Cervin, we were assured by them, that with mules it was impassible, and on foot several guides would be required to insure our safety. They said that a change of the glaciers by this pass was very rare—it had not happened for twenty years before; but now the whole glacier on the side of the Valais was in motion. Some attempts had been made to trace another path, but without success, as the progress of the glaciers had destroyed them, and they must wait for its settling. The danger appeared to exceed the love of gain, even with these mountaineers, and they owned that they would rather not undertake to accompany us. We had no desire to exhibit any fool-hardiness; and, bowing to the necessity, were preparing to return, when

two scoundrels, who made themselves known as *préposés* (officers of customs on the frontiers), claimed a right to examine our baggage. As we were about to return to Chatillon, and had not left the states of Sardinia, we resisted this obvious attempt to extort money; but as the beggarly manœuvre was also an unjust one, we shewed our passports, which neither of them could read, and we refused to grant what they had no right to demand: if we had entered or left the frontier, it would have been their duty. One of them seized my companion's horse's bridle to use violence, for which he received a blow from him with his drawing-stool over the arm, which he was likely to remember for some time: they instantly ran to their station for their arms and assistance; our pistols were as immediately put in requisition. This brought a nest of hornets about us; the people of the village were too much afraid of the rascals not to assist them, if necessary. Michael, and our guide from Chatillon, threw themselves upon us with the entreaty, that we would not proceed to further violence. All admitted the justice of our case; but said, that whatever the consequences might be to us, or to the *préposés*, they, the guides, were sure to be sufferers; and the terror of poor Michael, for whom we felt a real regard, was so great, that we at length agreed to let our luggage be opened. Our assailants then

offered to let us off for a franc, their only object; this we refused, declaring our determination to report their conduct at Turin: nothing was taken, the things were replaced; yet, even after this, with a sort of coaxing grin, the fellows asked something for having let us off so easily; but they did not succeed. We returned by the same route, fatigued by our long day's journey.

## CHAPTER IV.

Val d'Aosta—Fort Bard—Ivrea—Monte Serra—Biella Hospital—Gattinara—A Coquette—Val Sesia—Varallo—Sacro Monte—Borgomaniera—Lake of Orta—Isola Giulio—Omegna—Lago Maggiore—Isola Bella—Baveno.

*August 22d.*—We now felt it necessary to alter our plan, and decided upon hiring a volantín—a sort of gig—of our host, Jean Guarda, to be driven by him to Milan, by Biella and the Lake of Orta. We were obliged to part with our excellent guide from Chamouny, Michael Balma, whose disappointment in not crossing the Cervin was equal to our own. We left Chatillon about eight o'clock, and a league below it passed through the village of St. Vincent, where there are mineral waters, to which invalids resort. Near it we crossed a remarkable bridge of Roman construction, called the Pont des Saracens; it is thrown over a deep ravine. The view from the bridge, looking up the valley towards Chatillon, is very beautiful. We soon after, on our descent, found the valley turn abruptly to the right, at the defile of Mont Jovët, where the road is cut out, like a deep lateral furrow in the face of the rock that over-



hangs a dark and fearful abyss, through which the Doire, at a great depth, forces its way. This road is probably a work of the Romans. It must have been one of great labour, to have been thus formed before the use of gunpowder was known. It appears, from an inscription cut on the face of the rock, that it was greatly improved by the monks of St. Bernard, who are of the order of St. Augustin; but by a little manœuvre of Charles Emanuel, third king of Sardinia, who has added to the inscription on the tablet above and below, he has taken a large share of the credit to himself. It stands thus:

CAROLI EMANUELIS III SARDINIE  
REGIS. P. F. INVICTI AUCTORITATE

INTENTATAM ROMANIS VIAM  
PER ASPERA MONTIS IOVIS IUGA  
AD FACILIORUM COMMERCIORUM  
ET THERMARUM USUM

MAGNIS IMPENSIS PATEFACTAM  
AUGUSTANI

PERFECERUNT A. MDCCLXXI

REGNI XLII

On the left, and immediately above the road, stands the château of St. Germain, which must have rendered this place dangerous to travellers, when the lawless power of feudal lords levied contributions on those who passed near them. The château commands fine views up and down the valley.

The next town, Verrex, is situated at the entrance to the Val de Challant, which descends from the Mont Rosa. The appearance of the people here shewed a little improvement in cleanliness and health. The castle of Verrex, of which an immense square keep remains, is scarcely worth the trouble of visiting. We took refreshment at the *Scudo di Francia*, where I was poisoned by the wine; my throat felt as if on fire, and it was long before I was relieved from the painful sensations which it produced. Descending the valley we reached Fort Bard. The natural strength of this position is so great as nearly to have proved fatal to Buonaparte in his invasion of Italy in 1800.

When his army, on its way from the passage of the Great St. Bernard, to reap the laurels of Marengo, arrived at Fort Bard, it was checked by an Austrian garrison of four hundred men. The strength of the position may be conceived from the small number of soldiers placed there to defend it. This check, if effectual, would have been fatal to the French army; its rations would have been exhausted in a few days, and sufficient supplies by the Great St. Bernard were hopeless. Buonaparte's impatience and inquietude were excessive; his fate depended upon his power to force this pass without delay. He ordered an assault—the town was entered; but the street terraced out of the rock, through which the route lay, was commanded

almost within pistol-shot by the fort. The most daring attempts by the French grenadiers to take the fort were defeated, and an attempt to pass without silencing the batteries would have been certain destruction. During this affair, however, a party of fifteen hundred men, though exposed to the fire of the fort, had climbed the rocks and precipices of the Albaredo, a mountain above the town, and succeeded in conveying, but with incredible danger and difficulty, a four-pounder to the point of a rock, which commanded the fort, where it was successful in checking the battery that annoyed the troops in this ascent. Generals Berthier and Marmont now prepared for passing through the town with the main army by night; litter was strewn in the street, and the wheels of the cannon and waggons were bound with haybands, to deaden the sound of their passage. A party of soldiers had succeeded in raising a gun into the belfry of a church which commanded one of the gates of the fort. With the darkness the march began, but the wary enemy opened a tremendous and destructive fire. Each gun of the French army was drawn by fifty soldiers, who passed beneath the shot, grenades, and *pots de feu* of the Austrians, with as much silence and speed as possible. Fortunately, the gun in the belfry was so efficiently served, that it destroyed the gate of the fort, which it commanded; and the Austrians,

fearing an immediate assault at that point, surrendered.

Though the forms of the rocks around Fort Bard are grand and commanding, they are not picturesque. After passing through the narrow street of the village, we descended rather abruptly to Donas, where the road passes under an arch cut in the rock, a Roman work; and near it is a Roman mile-stone, bearing the number XXX. At Saint Martin's, lower down in the valley, a single arch, of great span, is thrown across the torrent of the Lesa, which flows from the Monte Rosa. From Saint Martin's, the mountains lessen, the valley widens; and at Settimo Vittone the traveller may be said to have reached the plains of Italy,—at least, the road is now nearly level all the way to the city of Ivrea, in the plains.

Though we were taken to the principal hotel, our accommodations were wretched: we found some amusement, however, in looking out upon the Grande Place, and watching the military evolutions of one corporal, one drummer, one fifer, and one (!) rank and file, relieving the city guard, with so much evident earnestness, and consciousness of their dignity and importance, that our gravity was perfectly upset. Ivrea is a town of great antiquity, known to the Romans as Eporedia—a name supposed by Pliny to be derived from the Gauls: here the Salassi, captives to the Romans, were

sold as slaves by public auction. It was the seat of a dukedom under the kings of Lombardy ; and its importance as a marquisate at a later period in history, is shewn in Durandi's *Marca d'Ivrea*. The Doire washes its walls, and the entrance to the city from Turin is over the river by a picturesque bridge which crosses the torrent. The old castle, with its turrets, now a prison, is a striking feature in any view of the town. Ivrea is the capital of the *Canavois*, a district which derives its name from the quantity of hemp it produces.

23d.—After a hot and stormy night, we set off for Biella, though the weather was not very promising for our journey. It was cloudy on the mountains ; but we looked back upon Ivrea and the plains—a scene of great richness, and of immense extent—as we ascended to cross the Monte Serra by the hills upon which the village of Bollenga is situated : these are covered with vines, whose produce is celebrated ; but a heavy calamity had just befallen the proprietors. About ten days since, a storm of hail swept across their hills, and destroyed all their hopes of a productive vintage. The mischief had extended over a line of about twelve miles ; the hail had beaten down the vines and the corn, and the wind had torn up the chestnut and walnut-trees, leaving to the cultivators only a scene of desolation.

The cross route which we took, as the shortest to Biella, was six leagues. On the hills it was steep and rugged, and even on the plain in bad condition. The glimpses which we occasionally caught of the mountains, as the clouds cleared off, caused our regret that we should have left Ivrea so hastily; and we determined, on arriving at Biella, to stay there to-day, instead of proceeding to Gattinara. The rain ceased, so as to enable us to walk out. Beyond the Vercelli gate, a grove leads to a terrace above the river Cervo, which presents a prospect of great extent and beauty. In the plains of Piedmont we distinctly saw the cities of Novara and Vercelli: numerous spires and towers marked other places of less importance; and the vine-covered hills, which formed the immediate foreground of this delightful scene, between which we caught the view of the plain, made up a picture of singular beauty. In our rambles we obtained some delicious peaches from a well-stocked garden; and walking in another direction, we met a sick man, brought by his neighbours from the country to the hospital of Biella. Four of his friends carried him on a sort of bier, covered closely over with a cloth, which was dripping wet from the rain: he had been brought from some distance. Two other friends accompanied the bearers, to relieve them in this act of kindness: their *patois* was an obstacle to our obtaining any account of

the poor fellow. We afterwards passed the hospital, and, looking in, saw with pleasure its cleanliness, and the attention to the comforts of the patients exercised by the Sisters of Charity.

This hospital was formerly a nunnery, and the figure of a female saint or two still decorated the façade. The conversion of a den of idlers into a hospital to assist the unfortunate, was a delightful sight; and the contrast was striking between the cloistered mummeries formerly prescribed to the nuns by the patroness of their order, and their present usefulness, and kindness to the wretched. We found the inn at Biella excellent: this probably arose from the number of visitors, pilgrims, to the sacred hill of Our Lady of Mount Oropa, a celebrated sanctuary, about six miles from Biella.

We had another display of the evolutions of a city guard this evening, which, like that of Ivrea, reminded us forcibly of the army of Bombastes Furioso.

24th.—Left Biella at six o'clock. At Cossata we found that the bridge had been swept away by the recent storm, and that its injuries had greatly exceeded the limits of the first report; the vines, corn, and hemp, had been destroyed to an extent of two millions of francs damage. We were obliged to make a *détour*, that led us for about five miles over a new road, which would have driven Macadam mad. Stones were left as

large as quartern loaves, and between them we sometimes sunk almost axle-deep in clay, in which the stones were imbedded. At St. Giacomo, however, we entered the high road from Vercelli to Gattinara, which is generally excellent. Here we were delighted with a fine view of Monte Rosa, towering over the lower line of the Alps; and on the left we distinguished the peak of our enemy the Cervin, which had refused us a passage at its feet.

Every town and village from Ivrea had, in the occupation of the inhabitants, shewn the propriety of the name of the district, *Canavois*: the whole population was engaged in stripping and otherwise preparing hemp. Whether walking or sitting, alone or in groups in the street before their houses, all were thus occupied. It appeared to be as much the amusement as the business of every one, from childhood to old age. After passing through Maserana, we stopped to take refreshment at Gattinara, where we were struck with a change in the costume of the women: the hair was dressed with radiating pins, as among the Comasques; and many of the women were beautiful, at least they appeared to us to be so, after the dirt and deformity with which we had lately been acquainted in the Val d'Aosta; but about *one* there could be no mistake. Opposite to the inn where we stopped at Gattinara, the Albergo del Falcone, we observed



a remarkably beautiful young woman, dressed, not *en bourgeoise*, like her neighbours, but *à la mode Française*. She coquetted at the door of her own house; mounted to her chamber, which we overlooked; went to her toilet, then walked out, returned, and sat employing herself at the door, to receive the admiration of two painters, a soldier, and three priests; but as we knew of no other gazers than ourselves, we had vainly thought that this exhibition was got up for the fine arts, and were not aware that the army and the church were participators. She had, however, observed us all at the windows of the different chambers of the inn. At length we heard some keen rogues tittering in the next room, and popping suddenly upon them (for our way out lay through their chamber), we caught the priests gazing on the forbidden fruit with very different feelings from those of St. Anthony.

Soon after leaving Gattinara, we crossed the Sesia by a horse-ferry, and, passing through the town of Romagnana, turned up the Val Sesia, driving through a beautiful valley, where the hills were richly wooded to their summits. Castles, churches, and oratories, relieved the masses of foliage. But the pleasure which these scenes gave us was soon destroyed by an unfavourable change of weather. Before we reached Borgo Sesia, the clouds descended and concealed the hills; rain

soon followed; and the remainder of our journey to Varallo, and its celebrated Sacro Monte, exposed us to an ablution which we did not consider at all necessary to the feelings with which we visited *La Nuova Gerusalemme nel Sacro Monte di Varallo*, as the guide-book calls this singular place of pilgrimage. We got into good quarters at the Gran Falcone; and to-morrow we shall add to the number of visitors, but not of devotees.

25th.—We ascended to the new Jerusalem. The view of Varallo and the Val Sesia was very fine from many points, particularly from the turret that overlooked the valley by which we reached the town yesterday: but nature, here, was less interesting than the art of this extraordinary place. On attaining the summit, we passed a chapel and crucifix, the *ex voto* of a pious German sergeant-major, as the inscription announces. A guide was necessary, and twenty were ready to offer their services, to point out all the chapels in the order of their numbers. The spot of ground which they occupy is small; but, from its varied surface, and their singular labyrinth-like arrangement, it seemed to be very extensive.

This remarkable place has nearly fifty chapels upon it, besides the church, fountains, &c. These chapels have groups of figures modelled in terra cotta, painted and clothed, and so placed and composed on the floors of the chapels, that they

represent some of the principal events in the life of Christ. The chapels—they ought rather, perhaps, to be called oratories—are never entered : they are merely frames, or cases, for the subjects grouped within them, which, seen from two or three holes in front, like raree-shows, excite the devotion of the faithful, and the disgust, except in a few instances where they exhibit skill as works of art, of the merely curious. Externally, these chapels are rich in the architectural display of façades, porticoes, domes, &c.; the figures within are of the size of life.

The first subject is the fall of man : Adam and Eve are represented, amidst animals of all sorts and sizes, from the elephant to the rabbit. In the second chapel, the series which refer to Christ commences with the Annunciation. One of the large compositions, representing the Murder of the Innocents, contains above sixty figures, the size of life, besides the painted groups on the walls, so arranged as to assist the composition. All the walls are thus painted, and many of them are masterly productions, not unworthy of Pelegrini Tibaldi, whose name is found in the list of those who were employed upon the works of the Sacro Monte di Varallo, together with those of Gaudenzia Ferrari, Fiammingho, and other artists of eminence, as painters, sculptors, and architects. The Transfiguration is represented upon an enormous scale. The group in the foreground is with

the demoniac boy ; on the mountain, an immense modelled mass, were the three disciples ; above them, Christ, with Moses and Elias ; over these, painted on the walls and ceiling of the dome, were the host of heaven ; and, above all, the Almighty. This subject occupied the highest and largest of the chapels, and the height of the whole composition, modelled and painted, was nearly a hundred feet.

Much effect is produced by the appropriate situation of some of the subjects. The access to Christ laid in the sepulchre was by a vault where little light was admitted ; and as it was difficult, on entering from the open light, to distinguish any object at first, the effect was very imposing. As well as real drapery, many of the figures have real hair, which appears very grotesque ; some, however, are finely modelled in character and expression. I was particularly struck with the head of a female in the Visitation. The executioners conducting to Calvary, or otherwise employed in inflicting suffering on Christ, are, to increase their disgusting characters, modelled with goîtres appended to their throats—a proof that they are not considered beauties here. No offence arose from the models being painted, because, as the subjects could only be seen from the peep-holes, and not in passing from one of these to another, as much illusion was often produced as by a picture.

On the Scala Santa we saw some devotees

crawling this way to heaven, encouraged by a concession of plenary indulgence granted by Pope Clement XII. to all who would climb these eight-and-twenty marble steps on their knees, say on each a *Pater, Ave, and Gloria*, and kiss devoutly each step. A marble tablet at the bottom of the stairs records the duty and the reward; and the faithful are informed by it, that these stairs are in *exact imitation* of the Scala Santa at Rome!

This extraordinary place originated in the piety of the *blessed* Bernardino Caimo, a noble Milanese, who obtained in 1486, from Pope Innocent VIII., a faculty to found this sanctuary. Only three or four chapels were built in the time of the founder; but so great was its reputation for sanctity, that princes and rich devotees contributed to its accomplishment to the extent now observed. St. Carlo Borromeo twice visited it, in 1578 and 1584; and the pallet *bedstead* on which this patron saint of Milan died is preserved here as a holy relic for the *adoration* of the faithful.

The church is handsome; and the cloisters where the priests reside are in a beautiful situation, commanding a view of Varallo and the lower Val Sesia. Whilst I was sketching this scene, one of the priests entered into conversation; and learning from me that we were going to Milan by the Lago Maggiore, he said there was a miracle worth our visiting at Santa Caterina de Sessa, on the

*di Lago:*

lake, where a large mass of rock which had fallen from the hill above the church, and which, if it had continued to fall, must have descended upon an image of the Virgin within the sacred edifice, was arrested by her miraculous power, and now remained, like the tomb of Mahomet, *in the air* over the church; and he added, as a *clincher*, that he had passed his stick entirely around it in every direction! As I did not belong to his church, I felt myself at liberty to doubt this. On the hill the priests have kindly established booths or shops for the sale of *corone*, *i. e.* crucifixes, Madonnas, beads, &c., which have acquired sanctity, and the power, *in some cases*, of working miracles, by having touched the bedstead of the blessed St. Carlo, or other relics possessed by the fraternity of the Nuovo Gerusalemme.

But the body is provided for here as well as the soul, and there are two booths within the precincts for the sale of liqueurs, where we saw some of the devotees preparing for the plenary indulgence at the Scala Santa, by plenary indulgence in brandy.

At Varallo, the bridge over the Sesia, a single arch of great span and height, and very narrow, is an exceedingly picturesque object, particularly when combined with the old houses which overhang the torrent, and the hill above, crowned with the chapels.

We returned to Romagnana, where, whilst our horse was refreshing, we took some wine, being invited to do so, in very bad English, by the landlord, who swore that it was of the vintage of 1816, and availed himself of this opportunity to astonish his townsmen with his accomplishments in the *lingua Inglese*, which he had learnt in America: he had learnt, too, somewhere, to charge us four times as much as he ought to have done, or would have charged a Piemontese.

The sun set soon after leaving Romagnana, and we were wrapt for some time in the splendour and beauty of the scene. Monte Rosa shone as bright as if lit up by the red flame from nitrate of strontian; and the plains, upon which a mist began to rise, presented the appearance of a vast sea, brightened by the glories of the setting sun. It was late before we arrived at Borgomanera, where a crowded inn, during the fair, for a long time prevented sleep: which was forbidden by the twanging of guitars, the noisy game of morra, and the roaring songs of drunken peasantry.

26th. — We were roused at half-past four by the drums of some Piemontese soldiers; and having soon after found two boatmen of the lake of Orta, we agreed with them, for twelve francs Milanese, to take our party, horse and gig, from Buccione to Omegna, the entire length of the lake, to be at our service for the day, and to put on shore or

stop wherever we pleased. Whilst we breakfasted, the barcaroli (boatmen) proceeded to Buccione, a distance of three or four miles, to get the boats ready. We drove through the village of Gozzano, and enjoyed fine views of Monte Rosa and of the great chain, which, bounding the scenes in that direction, increased the beauty of the country through which we travelled. The first view of the lake of Orta, on descending to Buccione, is one of the most enchanting views that I have ever seen; its tranquil waters are deeply embosomed amidst lofty mountains; and beyond these are the eternal snows of Monte Rosa and other parts of the great chain of the Alps; whilst the richness of the forests and vegetation immediately surrounding the lake give to the scene a depth and character peculiar to its situation. A striking feature in the view, and one that greatly adds to its interest and its beauty, is the Isola Giulio, a little island in the midst of the lake, where a convent, a church, houses and gardens, crowd the rock, which they cover, and their white walls sparkle upon the deeply-coloured lake. Nearly opposite to the island is the promontory of Monte Giulio, crowned by a Franciscan convent. We descended to the neat village of Buccione, at the head of the lake, where there is a good inn. Our rude boats were ready. In one we sent the horse and volantin, and embarked in the other ourselves. We rowed to the base of the sanctuary of St. Francis, situated on the promon-



tory. This also is a *sacro monte*, like that of Varrallo, where we found nineteen chapels, containing groups in terra cotta illustrative of the life of St. Francis of Assise. The ascent to it is beautiful: the ground on the promontory is delightfully laid out, and the views from it are of singular beauty. The shores are so profusely enriched by vines and trees and flowers, that the whole appears like a beautiful garden, whence probably its name, Lago d'Orta: it was anciently known as the Lacus Cusius. We visited the Isola Giulio: the church upon it is of high antiquity, and is not without its tales of romance. San Giulio, who lived in the fourth century, and whose ashes are preserved in a subterranean vault, you ought to believe, destroyed a monstrous serpent which infested the island; one of its vertebræ (rather that of a whale, which answers the purpose quite as well,) is shewn to the faithful, who dare not doubt it. How these tales of the infancy of man and of society are passing and have passed away! Some have regretted that truth should thus prevail, and destroy the pleasure which they think attaches to credulous obedience. Thus poor Keats has beautifully said:

“ Do not all charms fly  
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?  
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:  
We know her woof, her texture; she is given  
In the dull catalogue of common things;—  
Philosophy will clip an angel's wings.”

But there is a tale of interest about this island which happens to be true. Here Guilla, the wife of Barenger, the second king of the Lombards, took refuge, and resolutely defended herself against Otho, the first emperor of Germany, who had invaded Italy and deposed her husband. As early as the year 590, this island gave title to a dukedom; for Minulfo, then duke of San Giulio, was beheaded by Astolpho, king of Lombardy, for having favoured the descent of the Franks into Italy by the pass of the St. Gothard. The island appears to possess great strength. After our visits to the sanctuary and the Isola Giulio, we put in at the little town of Orta, where we were well and obligingly served at a good inn, and at not one half of what the cost of entertainment would have been at Baveno, a village situated on the shores of the Lago Maggiore, now only a few hours distant from us, but on the high road to Milan from the Simplon. We were told that a pedestrian excursion to Baveno might be made across the mountain which divides the Lago d'Orta from the Lago Maggiore, and that on its summit splendid views are presented of the numerous and beautiful lakes its panorama displays, and of the vast chain of the Alps seen from this elevation. A road also leads across the mountains, on the other side of the lake of Orta, to Varallo. These sources of enjoyment in short

excursions, the moderate charges and excellent accommodation, at Orta, as head-quarters, induced me to think that I had never seen any spot so truly enjoyable. Yet this beautiful lake, not three hours out of the high road of the Simplon, is almost unknown; and I was led to it simply by observing an indication in the map of a lake about ten miles long in the immediate vicinity of the Alps, and conjectured that it must be beautiful; we found it infinitely to exceed our expectations. Excursions, and the chase in the mountains, bathing, boating, and fishing on the lake, and its being within a day's journey of Milan, of Turin, of Como, of Bellinzona, of Monte Rosa, and of the summit of the Simplon, make it, as a central station for a summer's residence, one of the most desirable spots on earth.

From Orta, in about an hour, we landed at Omegna, a little town at the lower end of the lake; here we discharged our boatmen, who, as we had not written our agreement at Borgomanera, swore that we had bargained for twelve French instead of Milanese francs, a difference of about one-fourth. This they would have gotten from us willingly for their services, but reluctantly obtained it from us by their roguery. The rascals grinned at their triumph, and asked for wine, to drink our healths, which they did not get; however, their success in cheating us put them in such

good humour, that we were followed by shouts of “Buona viaggia, Signori!”

Our route lay through the valley of the Negoglia, by which the waters of the lake of Orta flow into the Lago Maggiore. The ride is beautiful, and over an excellent road into the great route of the Simplon, which it joins near Gravellona : thence to Baveno, on the shores of the Lago Maggiore, is about two miles. The first appearance of this lake to travellers from the Simplon is very charming.

27th.—Visited the Isola Bella. I had intended to ascend towards the Monte Rosa by the Val Anzasca, but clouds were beginning to form around the summits of the mountains, and the appearance discouraged me. On the lake, however, the weather was still fine. The beautiful forms of the mountains which surround this part of the Lago Maggiore surpass, perhaps, those of any other of the northern lakes of Italy ; at least they are better seen, for they are not too distant, and the eye commands them from the borders of the lake to their summits. The islands also are lovely, with the exception of the Isola Bella, which has been spoiled by *gimcracks* that have exhausted the language of admiration of the French and Italian eulogists, whilst to us they appeared to be in execrably bad taste. The terraces have been raised to the form of a pyramid, and decorated

at the angles with obelisks surmounted with flourishing tin ornaments ; and the trees have been trimmed so as to have become worthy of such company. This trash destroys half the pleasure which is derived from the beauty of the scene around the shores of the lake, as they are presented to the observer from the Isola Bella. Whilst my friend visited the other islands to sketch, I bathed and afterwards returned to the shore, and wandered about in the neighbourhood of Baveno till his return : we met again in the evening. He had been, he said, enchanted by the singing of some peasants ; and whilst he was yet describing it, we heard in the distance what he recognised to be the same sort of music. We leaned out of the windows of our room to listen : the sun had set beautifully, and darkness rapidly succeeded ; for in Italy, and at this season, twilight is of very short duration. The sounds came over the lake and from its borders, of voices evidently increasing in number and distinctness as they approached us ; and we soon found that our minstrels, a considerable number of young villagers, were assembling beneath the windows of our inn. Our landlord supplied each with a bundle of hemp for them to strip : they formed a large circle, and threw the stalks of the hemp into the centre, where it was soon set on fire ; and the supply of the strippers kept up a cheerful blaze for several

hours. During this time, and amidst the fun and mirth and peals of laughter of this village crowd, a leader gave an occasional signal, which produced perfect silence, when some one began one of those beautiful airs which had so much delighted us at a distance. The whole party joined in harmony, and never have I been impressed in the same way by music. The airs which they sung were various, and the intervals of noisy mirth increased their sweetness. I recorded some of the music, but it requires the situation, the hour, and the circumstance, to convey to another the pleasure which these airs associate with our remembrance of this evening.

## CHAPTER V.

Shores of the Lago Maggiore—Statue of St. Carlo Borromeo—  
Sesto Calende—Strada Sempione—Milan—La Scala—  
Corso—Carbonari—Milanese Justice—Leonardo da Vinci's  
Last Supper—Modern Art at Milan—Frontiers of the Mi-  
lanese—Vercelli—Turin—The Superga.

*August 28th.*—We left Baveno this morning at half-past four. At Belgirate, we had the first peep of the rock which overhangs Arona. The scenes along these shores are beautiful, and the construction of the Strada Sempione is admirable. The attention is constantly diverted from art to nature, and from nature to art. It is not in civil engineering only that the latter arrests attention. The colossal statue, in bronze, of Santo Carlo Borromeo is seen before arriving at Arona, on the right of the road, and we decided upon visiting it before we entered the town. A path leads, in twenty minutes, up to the hill, upon which the statue is placed, whence there are beautiful views of the lake. The height of the statue and pedestal is one hundred and twelve feet, of which the former is seventy-two feet. Though it is highly finished, there is a character of breadth and execution about it which makes its grandeur very impressive.

From the strong resemblance which it bears to all other memorials of S<sup>to</sup>. Carlo, we may conclude that the likeness is excellent. The expression is beautiful, and the action that of benediction in the Catholic church : in his left hand he holds a breviary ; the right is extended ; the head is gently bent forward, as if looking down. The head and hands are cast from models made by Cerano ; they are admirably executed : the mildness, dignity, and benevolence of the countenance exceed all praise. The drapery is composed of sheets of metal, so ingeniously arranged, that the edges are concealed in the folds, and the whole has the appearance of a single cast. These metal sheets are supported within by a mass of masonry built upon the pedestal. A passage has been left in it, by which those who like to boast of the adventure may attain the head of the figure. We were told, but we did not prove it, that a man sitting within the nose could not reach the inside top of the head. The English have a queer sort of celebrity on the continent for odd exploits. Two of our countrymen attempted to sustain this reputation by undertaking to breakfast *within* the *book* held by the saint ; but the sun's rays darting upon the cover made it so insufferably hot, that it expelled these *book-worms* before they had half gratified their appetites. The appearance of the figure from without is very impressive : its vastness, compared



with the surrounding objects, gives to it, in the scene in which it is placed, the appearance of Gulliver in Lilliput.

On entering Arona, we passed beneath a rock, which, rising several hundred feet above the road, actually overhangs it. A few miles below Arona we crossed the Ticino, to which the lake again diminishes ; and, at Sesto Calende, we entered the Austro-Lombard frontier. There we were openly asked by the custom-house officers for a present, which would spare them the pain of examining our baggage : a franc was gratefully accepted, with a return of good wishes for our journey. We rested at the inn whilst our passports were being arranged, and met an Englishman there who had left Switzerland without having provided himself with proper passports to enter the Austrian states of Italy. He had been two days waiting the return of a messenger from Berne ; in the mean time, he practised himself in curses upon the Austrian government : a large share, however, of his embarrassment arose from his own folly, in not having been fully prepared for his journey. As soon as our passports were finished, we proceeded, through Gallarate, where a large fair was being held, to Castellanza, where we slept.

29<sup>th</sup>.—Started at five, and, after a ride of eighteen miles, we arrived in Milan at nine o'clock. Before we entered the city, we examined the state

of the triumphal arch at the termination of the great route of the Simplon, the completion of which it was intended to commemorate. There is no probability at present of its ever being completed. We were told that orders are expected for demolishing what is done. A large proportion of the work was ready before Napoleon's reverses; and statues, basso-relievos, capitals, &c., remain in the magazines which surround the arch. The architectural sculpture already prepared is of beautiful workmanship, particularly the Corinthian capitals. It is much to be regretted that such a work was not completed before the great changes took place consequent upon the battle of Waterloo, because it was an intended memorial, not of the "murders which made a hero," but of a vast undertaking successfully accomplished, by which society has been, and will long be, benefited. The Strada Sempione, however, is its own memorial; and it cannot be passed without reflections upon Napoleon, in which his injuries are forgotten while contemplating his services to mankind. In Milan, we took up our quarters at the Croce di Malte.

We went in the evening to the Scala, where we saw Rosini's opera of "*Torvaldo e Dorliska*," and the ballet of "*Sesostris*,"—which, in splendour and costume, was the most magnificent spectacle that I ever saw. Mr. —, an Englishman, had the

management of the Scala ; my friend's acquaintance with him led to his shewing us much civility, and to our receiving some curious information upon the subject of his appointment. He had, before our visit to the theatre, walked with us in the Corso, and made us observe many remarkable characters in this crowded but delightful promenade. A house was pointed out to us from the Corso,—it was the state prison : some boys in it were reading at a window. Above thirty of the principal families are confined there for holding anti-Austrian political opinions—a punishment not limited to the heads of those families, for their wives, too, are imprisoned for having *talked* politics ; and that their sons may learn passive obedience and non-resistance, they have been drawn from the colleges of Padua and elsewhere, to finish their studies in a prison !

They boast of their criminal law here, and contrast it with the English, which, they say, condemns to death upon circumstantial evidence only. The following horrible affair, which has just occurred, will shew what its claim is to superiority. A young widow, with some property, admitted the addresses of a fellow named Carlo Deza ; its Milanese consequence, an unreserved intimacy, followed. After a short time, the villain agreed, with two others, to murder her, and possess themselves of her property. Her fondness facilitated

their plan. It was agreed that Deza, at a moment the least of all in which to expect treachery, should give a signal to the other two,—they rushed into her chamber, and her head was held whilst one of them cut it off. The murder and robbery were soon discovered : one of the villains confessed, and was executed,—his evidence was not received against the other two, who denied all participation in the murder. The bloody handkerchief of one, with which her mouth was stopped, was found in her chamber—this was offered in evidence. The wretch owned that he had lost such a handkerchief. The poor victim, in her agony, had grasped her villanous seducer and murderer so firmly, that she detached a button from his dress, and it was found in her clenched fist : even this was not admitted as evidence affecting the lives of the prisoners in this court, where a witness to the actual murder, or the confession of the criminal, are essential to condemnation. After having been acquitted here, they were tried again in a lower court, which takes cognisance of circumstantial evidence, where they were found guilty, and condemned to twenty years of imprisonment and hard labour.

Went to the Grazie to see the Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci. It is only three years since I saw it, and its rapid progress towards decay is obvious, even in this short interval. In 1821 I drew

four of the heads, and they were not then so much decayed but that the character and expression might yet be studied; now, the beautiful head of St. John is so obliterated, that the situation of the features can scarcely be distinguished. The St. Peter has greatly suffered; and the fine head of Christ is the only one in this picture in which the triumph of art, and the prodigious powers of the painter, are still evident. In this work, which has given an immortal reputation to Leonardo, it is to be regretted that even now, lost as it almost is, some copy is not made of it, which might at least preserve what does remain. Morghen's print has not a head in it like the original; nor is there a copy in existence which preserves ~~more~~ of this sublime work than its composition: the best that I have seen is in the Royal Academy, at Somerset House; but not a head in that bears a true resemblance to what even still remains of character and expression in this grand work; for the head of Christ is a modification of the head of Jupiter, and all the others are severe, almost to caricature,—this is not the case in Leonardo's work. The head of Christ infinitely surpasses every other attempt that I have seen to portray his character. The late venerable president of the Royal Academy, Mr. West, once remarked to me, that the expression of Christ should be “meekness without meanness, and dignity without ostentation;”—the head of

the Saviour in Leonardo's Last Supper has not only realised this, but gone far beyond what any imagination can conceive, unassisted by a sight of this production of da Vinci's ; for to these he has added the expression which had arisen out of the circumstances of Christ's situation — his known impending fate ; his affection towards John, and those he was about to leave to persecution ; his regret that one should be found to betray him : if all this does not actually exist in the picture, it gives rise to all these associations. The hundred-times-repeated falsehood about the state of this head, which Leonardo is said to have left unfinished in despair, is obvious even to a common observer ; and the cant of criticism which undertook to explain it, is instantly contradicted by the sight of this wonderful work. The head of Christ is the most *studied, finished, and effective*, in the picture.

When I was here in 1821, a wretched quack in art had undertaken to restore this celebrated work. After having daubed over the left hand of Christ (his own ought to have shrunk up in the attempt), and repainted part of the table and things upon it, he had so evidently betrayed his presumption and his ignorance, that public spirit enough was found, even in Milan, to appeal to the authorities, and stop his sacrilegious proceedings, which would have gone far with the next

generation in blasting the reputation of Leonardo da Vinci, by substituting the vile daubing of this German pretender (for he was a German) in the place of a work that ought to be sacred to all but *Time*, the mastery of whose withering hand alone is rapidly destroying all that he here can of the fame of Leonardo da Vinci.

Went again in the evening to the Scala: a repetition of the same ballet, “Sesostris,” which lost little by losing novelty.

31st.—Endeavoured to get access to the gallery of the Brera; but it was uncourteously closed upon strangers. We, however, entered the Academy, where they were arranging the modern works of art for exhibition. Amongst them, the finest—and it is a work of extraordinary merit—is a picture by the professor F. Hayez, a young man of thirty. The subject is Count Garbaniola, a Venetian noble, led out to execution, and parting with his wife and daughters in the court of the prison. The excellence of this picture left all others in the exhibition at an immeasurable distance. The portraits from the easels of the first Milanese painters would not have been received for exhibition in England; and the landscapes sink below any comparison in art. But the most offensive thing which we saw was a copy of the Last Supper of Da Vinci,—so villanously performed, that a sign-painter, to preserve his character and credit, must have disowned

it. It hangs in the Academy here, a reproach to those who permit it, as long as an atom of the original remains upon the walls of the refectory of the Grazie. Not even a distant resemblance is preserved to any of the heads ; and in brightness of colour and smoothness of execution, it challenges rivalry with a Birmingham tea-tray.

The population of Milan appears to be made up of beauty and deformity. More fine women are seen here than any where else, except London ; and more cases of decrepitude and deformity meet the eye than in any other place that I ever visited. Perhaps the contrast makes each more striking.

*September 1st.*—We succeeded yesterday in getting our passports arranged, and at ten o'clock we set out for Turin ; but our late departure, and the delays on the Austrian frontiers at Buffalora, prevented our going beyond Novara. On the frontiers of Sardinia we were surprised at meeting two gentlemen, who appeared to officiate there. After examining our passports, and perceiving that we were artists, they prevented the search of our baggage, and prohibited a fee to the disappointed préposés who surrounded us. These gentlemen were obliging and communicative. They gave us some useful information, and left us impressed with the conviction that all douaniers are not scamps ; though we were before this too readily disposed to believe so, after our treatment at Val Tournanche.



2*d.*—We proceeded to Vercelli: the road is flat, and to a painter “unprofitable;” the views were limited to the hedges right and left, and to a straight line before us. We passed through rice plantations of great extent; and when the rain set in, which accompanied us to Assione, it was scarcely unwelcome. It compelled us, however, at last to stop there, instead of sleeping at Chivasse, as we had intended. A good fire, a dinner, in which quails were a principal dish, and excellent clean beds, reconciled us to an otherwise poor inn, in an obscure village.

3*d.*—We started at five. The rain had ceased when we set out; but as if it had been waiting for us, and reserving its resources for our welcome on the road, in about an hour it poured down in torrents, from which we were glad to shelter ourselves, and get breakfast by the road-side, at an inn with the favourite sign in Piemont of the Three Kings. We soon grew impatient of the restraints of the weather, and bidding it defiance, set out to perform the ten miles which remained of our journey to Turin. Just as we arrived at the capital the rain ceased; and in the hope that this storm in the plains was a promise of fine weather in the mountains, we really congratulated ourselves upon its attacking us where it spoilt no prospect.

4*th.*—We have found little in Turin to interest us. This arises, perhaps, from our impatience to

get again into the mountains, which are now seen surrounding Turin in its beautiful locality, and invite us to enjoy the life and spirits which their atmosphere never fails to inspire. Whilst we were detained for the necessary examination of our passports, we visited the church of the Superga, which we reached after a rather fatiguing walk of two hours and a half. From its portico the scene is magnificent. Turin lay at our feet, in the midst of a fertile plain, watered by the winding Po and some of its tributary streams, and guarded by the Alps, which appear almost to surround it. This vast amphitheatre extends from the Monte Viso on the left, which in its pyramidal grandeur seems to command the lesser Alps over which nature has placed it, through the chain to the right of the Cottian, Graian, and Pennine Alps, to the beautiful form and stupendous proportions of the Monte Rosa — their queen, whose power, in this scene at least, is undivided ; for Mont Blanc cannot be seen from the Superga. Beyond Monte Rosa, to the right, the line of the Alps vanishes into air, “ thin air ;” as on the left, beyond Monte Viso, the plains of the Po and the Stura melt into the mist and obscurity of the distant Maritime Alps. From the cupola of the Superga, in favourable weather, it is said that Milan can be seen ; but we could not distinguish it to-day.

From what was so glorious in nature, we de-

scended to the sepulchres of the kings of Sardinia, whose resting-place is beneath the church of the Superga. We were surprised to see that the last king, so lately dead, had found his way into the best berth in these vaults—into a smart tomb decorated with *Cupids*; and other *appropriate* emblems. The appearance of the tomb was much older than the date of the entombment, February 1824; whether he had turned out a former inhabitant, and ordered a new epitaph adapted to his own virtues to replace that of his ancestor, we could not discover, and the inquiry was rather an awkward one to make of the custode.

Whence the name of Superga, given to this church, it is difficult to guess; its interior is daubed into the appearance of richness, by the painting of wood and plaster to resemble marble. The tombs also of the kings have their share of such pretence. Several crowned death's-heads are placed in the vaults, and decorate the tombs. Has vanity or humility done this?

“The devil smiled, for his darling sin  
Is the pride that apes humility.”

The church was built in consequence of a vow made by Victor Amadeus to the Virgin, to erect such a structure, if she would assist him in relieving the city of Turin, when it was besieged by the French in 1706. Turin was delivered; but

Victor Amadeus did not begin to redeem his promise till nine years after; and as it was not a written one, ungratefully gave her painted wood and plaster for marble. From the surrounding country, however, the church is an imposing object. We were annoyed on our return to find that we could not start to-day, because three or four signatures were necessary to our passports before we could cross the frontiers. As there is a franc or two levied upon the traveller for each of these signatures, the *necessity* for our detention is obvious; but it unfortunately keeps us against our wills, and increases our dislike of Turin.

## CHAPTER VI.

Leave Turin — Pignerol — Induction of an Archbishop — Valley of the Clusone — Fort of Fenestrelles — Col de Sestrières — Cesanne — Mont Genèvre — Douaniers — Briançon.

*Sept. 5th.*—Left Turin, and the first blackguard douanier of whom we inquired our way misdirected us, and sent us above a mile out of it. The idleness and sullen incivility of the people whom we met on the road was remarkable. We constantly passed carts and other vehicles, but, from the diligence to the drag, every conductor slept in it, and we had generally to roar to them to give us room enough to pass; their tempers were always disturbed with their sleep, and we received curses from them which might have added to Dr. Slop's. After resting to refresh at Nonè, we proceeded over a flat road to Pignerol, where every inhabitant was out to receive, at his induction, a new archbishop (the Comte de Reis). Just as we arrived, and were snug in the chamber of our inn, the rain burst upon the town with violence, and all the preparations were soaked. A painted paper triumphal arch dropped bit by bit; the fraternities of rags and wretchedness, hid in

part by dirty white and yellow robes, appeared wetter than chickens in the wettest day, and presented a scene of which it was very difficult to say whether it should excite commiseration or laughter. The large square had been levelled and strewed with sand and soft soil, which the rain soon converted into delicious mud, ankle deep. None, apparently, except the halt, the lame, and the deformed, could be found to join in the necessary vestments of ceremony, perhaps of penance; but of those the city of Pignerol turned out a large proportion. The archbishop arrived about five o'clock, and much of the ceremony was evidently abridged. He was preceded by two dripping trumpeters, and followed by about twenty people on horseback, forming a motley cavalry; among them was a decent looking puppy or two, who saw nothing sacred in the ceremony, but each, evidently considering himself by far the most interesting personage in the exhibition, smoked his cigar, and curvetted before some pretty girls in the windows of the Grande Place.

At length the rain abated, the processional forces, which had been dispersed by its violence, reassembled, and, in something like order, they proceeded to the church. The wretched objects mentioned, headed by the verger, dressed in a new suit of tawdry, and with a long sword which puzzled his legs exceedingly, took the lead; these

were followed by half a dozen filthy looking monks, then the priests of the city and those attached to the cathedral; then the archbishop himself, wearing his mitre, beneath a white canopy borne by four persons, and riding upon a white horse, caparisoned with white cloth and silver bullion. This was not in imitation of his Master's humility in entering Jerusalem. The great man's household followed, and the procession was brought up by a large mob of citizens and the neighbouring peasantry. On entering at the church door the archbishop sprinkled those nearest to him with holy water—they had just received some purer from heaven. At the porch he went through some ceremonies too long for us to witness, stewing, as we were, in a dirty crowd, from which we found it difficult to extricate ourselves. We, however, escaped, and got to the inn, tired, and, I fear, not much edified by the mummary.

6th.—On paying our bill, I hinted to the waiter that I had seen the dinner bills of the numerous visitors of yesterday, and they were charged only 35 sous for what we had been charged 80; the difference could only be to impose upon us as strangers. He had frankness enough to confess that it was customary thus to charge the English, and we could not obtain any redress against this *customary* instance of Piemontese dishonesty.

On leaving Pignerol to enter the valley of the Clusone, the beautiful view of the chain of the Alps, as it is presented on the plains, is soon shut out by the lower ranges of mountains that bound the Val Pragelas, through which the river Clusone flows. Napoleon intended that the road up this valley should communicate by the Col de Sestrières with the route of the Monte Genève, the *route d'Espagne en Italie*, and thus avoid the long détour by Susa and Turin. But this is contrary to the policy of the Sardinian government, which has allowed the route by the Col de Sestrières to fall into decay; and thus travellers, who would pass by the Mont Genève to Parma or Genoa, are obliged to go through Turin. About three miles from Pignerol we passed the quarries of gneiss, which are worked for building a new bridge over the Po, at Turin. Our ascent was gradual in some places: the river Clusone forces its way through ravines in which the road had with difficulty been made on one of its banks. This was formerly known as one of the valleys of the Vaudois, the Protestants of Piemont; it is now their boundary. They have no churches on the left bank of the river, though those of St. Germain and Pomaret, at the entrance to the valley of the Germanasca, or, as it is also called, of St. Martin's, are seen on its right bank, nearly opposite to Perouse, the principal town in



the valley of the Clusone. Near Perouse the strong fortification of the Fenestrelles is first seen, with its white bastions, lines, and parapets, stretching down the brow of the hill, which appears to close the valley at Fenestrelles. In fact, a narrow road, cut out of the rock, is the only means of passing this defile to reach the village beneath the fort.

On our way we had observed a countryman catch a very fine trout in the Clusone, which we bought, and it made part of our repast whilst we rested. The fort of Fenestrelles is now chiefly employed as a prison for political offenders; several of the carbonari of Piemont are confined here: it is also the prison of that villain Mingrat, the curé of St. Quentin's (Isère), who, after murdering, with circumstances of horrible aggravation, a woman, one of his parishioners, fled from justice, and escaping across the frontiers, felt himself safe in Piemont, where the clergy never suffer publicly for their crimes: he is now kept in the fort of Fenestrelles, rather for protection than punishment. Our guide, upon hearing me relate the affair of St. Quentin's, confirmed the report of the practice of this infamous injustice. He said, that recently, near Caluso, a traveller was left for dead by a brigand who had stopped and robbed him; the poor victim was, however, taken up and cured of his wounds. On entering the church to make acknowledgment for the mercy of his life spared,

he saw, in the priest officiating at mass, his murderer. He immediately went out and gave information to the proper authorities, who cautioned him of the danger of charging a priest with the crime ; he was positive, and stated that he had some money about him when he was robbed curiously marked, which he described. After the service, the priest was arrested—beneath his canonicals was the very dress in which he had made the attack, and the marked money, which he had been afraid to pass, was found upon him. The priest was ordered into confinement, but neither publicly tried nor punished.

From the French side, the appearance of the fort is very impressive ; it perfectly commands the pass of the valley of the Clusone. It is considered one of the strongest frontier defences of Piemont. Above Fenestrelles the road rises rapidly, and winds along the brink of a precipice for nearly two miles : the route, which had been excellent under Napoleon, is suffered by the present government to go to ruin ; and the large stones which fall from above are never removed, unless a peasant roll them out of the way, as obstacles to the passage of the rude carts which are now used here. Jean Guarda had been a little too free in refreshing at the village ; he had lost prudence as he gained boldness, and our necks, and his volantin, had nearly fallen sacrifices to the exchange. He flou-

rished over the stones, and whirled us round the angles of the road, with an awful defiance of danger. His excuse was the long journey which he had to perform to-day. At Traverse, where we hired an additional horse for crossing the Col de Sestrières, we rested for a short time; there the punishment of Jean's intemperance overtook him—that which had made him careless of danger had made him careless of his cloak, with which some *Filch* of the valley marched off. The day sunk before we began the ascent of the Col de Sestrières; but a bright and beautiful full moon arose and lit our passage. The depth given by haze and darkness to the valleys beneath us, and the broad and grand forms of the mountains which surrounded us, presented a scene new and striking. The difficulty of measuring the magnitude or distance of objects by the eye was increased, while the absolute silence, unbroken but by ourselves, wrapt the feelings in contemplation. The plain of the col is about two miles long, and rich in pasturage; we saw in the moonlight several châteaux. After descending some time, we arrived at what we thought was Cesanne; for we met there a man whom we had sent forward to bring back the horse which we had hired at Traverse; he had taken a shorter path and arrived before us. We entered the house, took possession of the only chamber, and had tossed up for choice of the bed

or the table as a resting-place for the night, and begun to inquire about supper, when we found that we were not at Cesanne, but at the hamlet of the Col de Champlas: we were doubly disappointed, as the scenery by moonlight led us to expect some fine views on our descent in the morning: It was necessary, however, that we should proceed, and we continued to wind down the mountain by the finely constructed road made by order of Buonaparte; and crossing the torrent of the Doira Susana, which runs through the valley of Oulx to Susa, entered Cesanne at 11 o'clock. At the first inn no accommodation was to be had—at another, to which we were civilly directed by a *préposé*, we knocked up the host and hostess, and they, with great good temper, cooked some eggs, &c. for us. The only room to be had contained two beds—one was already occupied by a snorer; but, wrapt in our cloaks, we threw ourselves upon the other, and soon forgot our fatigue.

*7th.*—We were awakened before daylight by a fellow entering our room, and violently disputing with our sleeping partner; we grumbled at the disturbance, but it ended only in the rising and going out of the man who had occupied the other bed. We breakfasted on delicious milk, and were delighted with the kind attentions of our hostess, who was pleased and surprised that we could be content with any thing she could procure for us,—

her poor country, she said, afforded so little. Her mother, an old woman of eighty, who, as she herself said, still worked in the fields, offered us her snuff, and when she found a pinch exchanged for a little piece of money left in the box, she shewed us her beads, and promised us her prayers for our journey, and a happy return to our families. We here learnt some of the blessed effects which the change of government, after the fall of Napoleon, had brought with it. The owners of this house, misnamed an inn, now pay an annual tax of 200 francs for their house, and another of 100 for their goods ; under the government of Buonaparte, 50 francs was the amount for both. They cannot now pass the frontiers to the first town in France, Briançon, without leaving a deposit for the mules upon which they travel—to be forfeited in the event of their not being returned. For the *boll*, or written permission to pass, a tax of 15 sous is paid for each beast. This tax placed us in some difficulty about Guarda's horse, but it was removed by the kindness and confidence of Laurent Rigat, our host. A deposit of two Napoleons was required from Guarda, unless he could get a person to be answerable for the amount, in the event of his not returning the *boll* to this place, countersigned at that frontier by which Guarda and his horse should return into the states of Sardinia, and we were obliged here to name the place.

Upon our saying that we intended to go from Grenoble to Montmelian, they inserted the name of Chapareillan, as the frontier station where we should leave France. Rigat, who had become Jean Guarda's guarantee at Cesanne, having accompanied us to the French custom-house on the Mont Genève, offered the security that was required here also — thus making himself answerable to the amount of 80 francs for a total stranger; and the penalty will certainly be enforced if our guide neglects to return the bolls within the time specified upon them.

The ascent of the Mont Genève, from Cesanne, is by a very fine road, constructed by order of Napoleon. After ascending about three miles, we reached the plain of the Mont Genève.

At the village on the summit of the pass, we were subjected to the search of the custom-house officers. We were asked if we had any thing to declare; our answer, 'No,' appeared to satisfy them; but, after being detained nearly two hours, whilst they examined our passports, and the measurement and description of the horse were being taken, we thought that we were about to depart in peace, when a young official, whom we had neglected to fee, with a pen in his teeth, swaggered out and ordered every thing to be unpacked and examined, even to the untwisting of small parcels of paper. We complained of this, and

said, that if it had been necessary, it might have been done whilst the arrangements were making for the horse: but the puppy was in the power of place, and we were obliged to submit, though it was with an ill grace, to what we could not prevent.

The pass of the Mont Genève is one of the lowest across the great chain, its height not exceeding 6000 English feet: barley grows on the summit,—there are fine pasturages on the slopes of the surrounding mountains; and though the winter is long and severe at the village of Bourg Mont Genève, it is constantly inhabited. In the year 1807, an obelisk, sixty-five feet high, was erected on the plain near the village, to commemorate the completion of this road over the Alps, but the tablets, with the inscriptions which were upon them, have been removed! On this plain, and almost from a common source, two rivers, the Doira-Susana and the Durance, take their rise, whence the former flows into the Po, and the latter into the Rhone.

The road which descends to Briançon from the Genève is admirably constructed, and winds down the mountain by a succession of zig-zags, which render the descent gentle and commodious. The views of Briançon and its forts are very striking: the valley, or rather confluence of valleys, in which it is situated, presents a scene of mountain forms

more beautiful and picturesque than any that we have passed; and the magnificent larches and pines in the forest through which we descended, formed to the scenes foregrounds which were perfectly in character. The seven forts of Briançon are placed on the hills which command the approach on the sides both of Dauphiny and Piémont. The valley of the Durance at and above Briançon narrows into a deep ravine, across which a bridge, an arch of 120 feet span, is thrown with great boldness from precipice to precipice; beneath it, at a frightful depth, the Durance forces its way. This bridge is the means of communication between the town and the forts, which rise above each other to the Fort de l'Infernet, situated 1000 feet higher than the col of the Mont Genève, and which requires a walk of three hours from the bridge to attain it. Few places are so strong by nature and by art as Briançon; and the fortifications, in spite of their geometrical forms, aid the picturesque effect of this extraordinary place.

At the foot of the Mont Genève is a fountain, where an inscription formerly bore the name of Napoleon, and commemorated the construction of the new route: this has been removed, lest some thirsty traveller should bless his memory. Is it possible that the wicked and the weak who ordered the destruction of such memorials as this on the fountain, and the inscriptions on the obelisk, can have



fancied that with their removal the fame of Napoleon would be forgotten? Or would they have his violent deeds alone remembered, and destroy all records of the benefits which he conferred upon society? Those were transient, but these are imperishable; and the infatuation which conceives that, by closing its own eyes to the great deeds of this great man, it can leave them in darkness to the rest of the world, is like that of the ostrich, which thrusts its head into the sand, and exposes its weakness and indecency.

## CHAPTER VII.

Gendarme — View of Briançon — Valley of the Guisanne —  
 La Lozet — Col de Lautaret — Mont Lens — La Grave —  
 Storm — Val Romanche — Route d'Espagne en Italie — Gal-  
 leries in the Combe of Malval — Bourg d'Oysans — Combe  
 of Gavet — Vizille — Buonaparte and the Bourbons — Gre-  
 noble — Statue of the Chevalier Bayard.

*Sept. 8th.* — We have learnt at Briançon that the route to Grenoble by the Col de Lautaret is impassable in a volantín; my friend has therefore decided upon proceeding to Grenoble by Embrun and Gap with Jean Guarda, whilst I have engaged a man and horse, to reach that city by the valleys of the Guisanne and the Romanche. There was some delay with my passport, in consequence of the mayor's not being able for some time to find in it the signature of the minister of the interior; when he discovered it, he offered many apologies for the detention. I had scarcely, however, left the city-gate with my guide, when we met a gendarme who demanded my passport, which he examined and returned; but this was a flourish of petty authority, that might have been a duty *en route*, but was uncalled for here, because he knew my guide, and knew that I could not have

left the town without my passport having been registered, and we were not a hundred yards from the gate. It is wise, however, for a stranger to bow with temper to these regulations in a foreign country; but no one feels the annoyance so much as an Englishman, and any unnecessary exercise of this power is sure to ruffle him.

From the entrance of the Val de Guisanne, Briançon, with its forts rising from its walls to the summit of the Mont de l'Infernet, a peak nearly 10,000 feet above the level of the sea, and the open valley of the Durance below the town, form a scene of great beauty. The road to the Col de Lautaret ascends by the valley of the Guisanne, and passes through many villages; one of these, Chante-Merle, derives its name from the great number of blackbirds in its immediate neighbourhood. On looking back from any part of the valley below Monestier, Briançon appears to close the vista; but from Monestier, the mountains, which seemed to have risen above each other behind Briançon as we ascended the valley, were now surmounted by the peak of the Viso. This route from Briançon to Grenoble was known to the Romans, and Monestier was by them called Stabadio. There are mineral baths here, but they are not much frequented. From Briançon to Monestier the road is good for chars; but beyond this place it is impracticable, except by mules.

Near the village of Le Casset we passed the fine glacier of Laciale, which descends from the Mont d'Arcines. Above this village the valley becomes barren and savage; the stunted larches almost cease, and snows and glaciers are rapidly approached. The few spots in which soil is found are sown with barley, and a scanty produce is the uncertain reward of the cultivator. Where there had been irrigation, a rank grass had sprung up, which was cut and dried as winter food for the cattle; this they were gathering with great care and wrapping it in a cloth to carry it to the grange; for the lives of their cattle depend upon this store, as the snow lies on the ground here eight months in the year. The upper part of the valley is very narrow, and bounded by mountains, which are scathed and pinnaced upon their ridges: the débris which falls from them almost fills the little space in the valley; yet even here villages are found.

At La Lozet, where we rested to refresh the horse, I entered the inn, and found there two or three douaniers. This village is situated at the foot of one of the dangerous passes which communicate with Piemont by this valley. The profit upon coffee, tobacco, velvet, &c., when the duty can be evaded, tempts the smuggler to enter France by paths where his neck is in constant danger. Still higher up the valley, at La Made-

laine, there is another station of douaniers. Whilst the horse baited at La Lozet, I ordered refreshment; and had placed before me a bottle of excellent wine, bread, butter, eggs, and cheese, roast and boiled mutton; for all this mine host's fair and dirty daughter, after three efforts to make the most of the account, was restrained by her conscience from charging me more than 13 sous ( $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ !); and I was overwhelmed with her gratitude when I gave her a franc and refused change.

We continued to ascend the valley over stones and the beds of torrents for above an hour, when the ascent to the Mont de Lautaret became very rapid. On the left, the Guisanne, having just issued from a large glacier, tumbles down the mountain-side, forming fine cataracts in pursuing its course to the Durance. On the Col de Lautaret, the scene was strikingly contrasted with that which we had just passed; the rocky surface was concealed by a rich mountain pasturage, where numerous cows, goats, and sheep, were fed during the short summer enjoyed there. The col was rather a basin than a plain; and it was not only covered with rich short grass, but a conical mountain which arose on the side towards Piemont was verdant even to its summit. This mountain is well known to French botanists: in the months of June and July it is covered with alpine plants and flowers of great beauty and rarity, and it then ap-

pears like a land of Goshen amidst all that storms and avalanches have rendered sterile and savage. On this col is an old hospice, founded by Humbert the Second, one of the *maisons hospitalières* which he established in Dauphiny on the mountain-passes : it is under repair at present. As we descended from the col, we saw the enormous glacier of Tabuchet, where the Romanche has its source ; it presented itself on our left. In about an hour we proceeded along the banks of the river ; the day closed in soon after we had entered the valley of the Romanche, but the moon shone brightly. We soon reached the village of Villar d'Arène, and thence, by a steep descent, to a fine fall of the Romanche, where, aided by the effect of moonlight, the defile into which the torrent rushed seemed deeper and darker than it really was ; for the moon shining on the upper part of the falling waters, and on the mist which arose from the cataract, the depths into which it fell was immeasurable by the eye at this hour ; but its awful roar was heard from beneath. On winding round a projection which overhung the fall, and ascending the path which skirts a precipice, the snows and glaciers of Mont Lens burst upon us, lit up by the moon with a peculiar brightness, whilst the base of the mountain, sunk into mist and indistinctness, produced a sublime and impressive effect upon the imagination rather than the eye, for it

was aided by the deep and distant murmurs of the Romanche.

After descending by a steep and narrow path, which led down to the river, we saw the moonlight shining on the slate roofs of the village of La Grave. We were received at an auberge, chez Boi, recommended by our host of Briançon as the best in the village; but the filth and stench of the first room, in which three or four ill-looking fellows appeared to be enjoying themselves, made me ask at once for a chamber. "Did I want one to myself?" "Certainly." I was then shewn through the stable up into a loft, where five or six dirty beds were stowed round in cribs; beyond this I was led to a narrow room, which a bed and table almost entirely occupied. The old woman who attended me told me that Monsieur le Préfet and a party had slept there last night: this was probably true, for I had met him between La Lozet and Madelaine, with a lady and two gentlemen, on horseback, attended by a gendarme. I hope they enjoyed their accommodation here; I had little prospect of it, moderate as my expectations had become; but supper was the first consideration. I had seen enough of her kitchen to ask for boiled eggs, as the safest speculation. When I inquired for her best wine, she shook her head, and said it was very dear—thirty sous a bottle, and that its price was owing to its being a wine of Provence, brought

all the way from Avignon; but hunger and thirst forbade bounds to my extravagance. The wine was brought, and I never tasted any so delicious. On the bread and eggs, with this wine, I fared sumptuously. Though I was greatly fatigued, the filthy appearance of the bed prevented my approaching it; I therefore wrapped myself up in my cloak, and lay on the rickety table, my small bundle serving for a pillow. Stanfield had taken on my portmanteau in the volantín. I congratulated myself that I had retained my pistols, for I did not like the appearance of the men below, which by no means recommended them to confidence; and some suspicions had arisen in the course of the day, that an unarmed traveller might have met with foul play; I therefore fastened my door, and kept on my guard. I do not know whether it was the expectation of attack, or the hard resting-place which I had chosen, but I could get no sleep; the buzz of a wretched fly in the toil of a spider, roused me as effectually as the falls of the avalanches into the valley from Mont Lens opposite, which often occurred. About two o'clock, however, fatigue mastered repugnance; I ventured to lie on the bed, and soon fell asleep.

*9th.*—About four o'clock I was aroused by the noise of a violent storm, and the dripping of the rain upon my bed; its suddenness surprised me. I arose from my wet resting-place, and looking



out of the window, saw the storm spending its fury around Mont Lens, which was sometimes obscured in clouds, at others its glaciers were brightened to effulgence by the lightning. Some of the inmates had been disturbed, and their yawns and mutterings, joined to the snoring of those who still slept in defiance of the storm, aided the beating of the rain against the windows, and the bursting peals of thunder, to form a horrid midnight medley. I could not sleep; but devoted the hours which passed until daylight in writing to England and penning-in some sketches made yesterday.

Bread, eggs, and wine, again for breakfast. The bill, including my extravagance in Provence wine, was forty sous! My poor landlady overpowered her capital customer with gratitude for his visit, and regret that the storm had broken his rest. My doubts of the honesty of the Dauphinois, like those of my friend at Aosta, did wrong to the characters of those with whom I had sojourned; and I owe them this acknowledgment.

At La Grave the winters are so severe, that the inhabitants find it sometimes impossible to break the ground for burying their dead at that season, and they suspend the bodies in the granaries until the succeeding spring.

About noon the weather cleared up, and we left La Grave. Our route lay through a deep ravine, where the path was difficult and rugged; and

blocks of stone and rocks of enormous magnitude were wildly strewn above: the mountains, which rose perpendicularly from the slopes formed by their débris, were surmounted in some places by glaciers which seemed to cut against the sky. The waters which melted from these were poured out from a thousand feet above the valley upon the slopes, and thence streamed down in white lines of foam, which crossed, in their course to the Romanche, the path by which we descended the valley, rendering it generally difficult to pass, and, in consequence of the late rains, in some places dangerous. There is one cataract, near the hamlet of La Dauphine, which, from its volume and height, is remarkably fine; it bears the name of Le Saut de la Pucelle. My guide said that a peasant girl, who saw no other means of escape from the violence of a huntsman whom she had met in the mountain, boldly leapt from the summit of the fall, and escaped unhurt. If the story be *true*, St. Geneviève had some hand in it. The quantity and the magnitude of the rocks which have fallen from the mountain is immense. I made fifty paces in passing one of these; against several of them stone châteaux had been raised, which were comparatively so diminutive as to be almost unobserved; in these, during the summer, the goatherds live. Nothing can be imagined more rugged, savage, and dreary, than this ravine—it is better described by this

word than by valley. Larger mountains, but at a greater distance, produce not half the impression upon the feelings that is excited by these lower ranges, hanging out as they do from 1000 to 2000 feet over the valley. Some are seen with glaciers on their summits, which intersect the sky : an avalanche from these would overwhelm the traveller who passed beneath ; and the detritus which forms the slopes brought down by such causes gives evidence of their frequent occurrence. Our route lay above two hours through this scene of danger, and ended only at La Dauphine, where we took refreshment, still cheap ; for a bottle of excellent wine, bread, cheese, and butter, was only charged ten sous.

La Dauphine lies rather high above the torrent ; but a short descent brought us to the banks of the Romanche, and we once more arrived where trees, farms, and cottages, speckled the scene ; and we were brought again to society and is associations. In half an hour from La Dauphine we arrived at the termination, as far as it had been made, of the Route d'Espagne en Italie, which Napoleon had ordered to be carried through these wild and secluded valleys, to form a communication between Grenoble and the Mont Genève, across the Col de Lautaret, — thus saving forty miles of distance, by avoiding the route through Gap and Embrun. This road was began in obe-

dience to a decree dated February 17th, 1804. The last portion finished of this work, was a gallery cut through the rocks on the bank of the Romanche, a little below La Dauphine. The situation is exceedingly wild, but the gallery is not of great extent. From this place, a road, admirably made, leads, on the banks of the river, for about a mile, through a defile, and amidst scenes which reminded me of some parts of the Val Dovedro. The road then ascends to the great gallery, which is at least as extraordinary a work as that of Gondo, in the route of the Simplon. Here, however, the excavation is nearly two hundred feet longer; but it is chiefly remarkable for its great height above the torrent. As it was impossible to continue the road by the river side, it has been carried nearly five hundred feet above the river, which it perpendicularly overhangs. From three lateral openings in the gallery, cut through the rock to admit light to the passage, the traveller can look down, if his head be steady enough, upon the jagged rocks and foaming torrent beneath.

Between the two galleries, and above the right bank of the river, the little church and village of Freney are seen amidst woods and fields, which strikingly contrast with the desolation of the scenes above La Dauphine. From La Grave to Bourg d'Oysans, the valley bears the general name of

the Combe of Malval ; but below Freney, the gorge is distinguished by the name of *Les Infernets*. This is the part which has been avoided, by carrying the road up the side of the ravine, and through the great gallery ; beyond which, it still rises on the mountain side, where precipices, hundreds of feet above and below the road, give to the scene an extraordinary character of vastness, from their proximity. The eye cannot survey the entire forms of the mountains, and estimate their magnitudes, by their distance ; the comparison of the surrounding objects can alone be made with man, and the mind shrinks in the contemplation. After winding round one of the buttresses of Mont Lens,—for our course from La Grave had been at the base of this mountain,—we passed through the village of Mondelent ; whence the descent, though sometimes on the brink of precipices, is gradual to the bed of the Romanche, below where it issues from the gorge of Malval. The road had been so far finished, that carts employed in its formation could pass ; but it is now so neglected and decaying, that a light char cannot be taken from the combe of Malval to Bourg d'Oysans. No cantonniers were appointed to preserve that portion of the road which had been accomplished, and it has gone to ruin.

Having attained the banks of the Romanche, and pursued its course for half a mile, we crossed it on a wooden bridge, and proceeded, through a

fertile valley, to Bourg d'Oysans, anciently *Ca-torissium*, leaving on our left the narrow gorges of the Vençon, which descends from the savage valley of St. Christopher, and falls into the Romanche near Bourg d'Oysans. Before our arrival at this place we recrossed the river, and shortly after, the broad fantastic cap of Madame Ratoux, with preparations for our supper, were welcome sights. How much I enjoyed a clean bed, after my adventures at chez Boi, may be easily conceived.

*10th.*—We left Bourg d'Oysans at six o'clock. The clouds hung about the mountains, and it was only in occasional glimpses that I could distinguish the rugged and snowy peaks of Mont Lens, at a height greatly increased in appearance by the circumstances under which I saw them. The road to Briançon formerly lay over a part of Mont Lens—a pass of great elevation and extreme difficulty. Some works of Roman construction yet remain upon it.

The almost perpendicular ridge of the lower range of mountains which surround the valley or basin of Bourg d'Oysans, particularly on the southern side, present some most extraordinary instances of tortuous stratification. In the eleventh century, the quantity of *débris* brought down by the torrents, which are most impetuous in the vicinity of Bourg d'Oysans, formed a dike at the entrance of the combe of Gavet, into which the

valley of Bourg d'Oysans leads. The water accumulated within the dike, and during upwards of two centuries formed a lake which covered the present land in the valley of Bourg d'Oysans to the depth of sixty or eighty feet. Its surface was three leagues long, and one league wide; and in some old records it bore the name of the Lac du St. Laurent. In September 1229 the dike burst, the torrent swept away all the villages in its course, and it is reported to have even submerged a great part of Grenoble. On turning into the combe of Gavet, we soon arrived at the narrow pass where this dike had been formed: near it, some fine cataracts descend from the mountains. At the early hour of our passing, the sun shone upon the spray rising from the falling waters, and presented brilliant irises, their hues varying in intensity with the influence of the currents of air upon the mists which they dispersed.

The combe of Gavet has a picturesque character not unlike the glen scenery of the Highlands of Scotland. The beautiful began to prevail over the sublime, and cultivation over sterility. We passed through the villages of Gavet and Lâne, corrupted from its Roman name of Chichiliana. Here we rested to bait the horse; and hence, in an hour and a half, reached Vizille. This town is finely situated in a little plain surrounded by lofty mountains, on the high road from Gap to Gre-

noble. It was at Vizille that the parliament of Dauphiny made a declaration fatal to the power of the Bourbons; hence it has been called the cradle of the revolution. From Vizille, the road to Grenoble rises by a gentle ascent, from which a beautiful view of Vizille is presented; it then continues on the hills until its descent, which is gradual, from Brie. This is a village whence Grenoble is first seen in a very striking point of view. From this place, avenues of chestnut-trees extend almost to the capital of Dauphiny, and the approach to it has all the character of the vicinity of a large city. We were driven to the Hotel of the Ambassadors.

The Bourbons are not in high odour in Dauphiny, on the line of road by which I re-entered France. Napoleon is spoken of with affection, and his successors with contempt. Much of this has probably arisen from the cessation of employment, by stopping the works of the new road, and the destruction of their hopes of advantage and benefit from the transit of merchandise and travellers. Great advantages would also be derived from ready access to the lead and copper mines which are worked in the combe of Malval. To me, as an Englishman, many whom I met with were unrestrained in their praises of the emperor. It is probable that the Dauphinois have been made to feel that their welcome reception of Buonaparte, on his return from Elba, at Gap, Vizille, and Gre-



noble, and the assistance which was afforded to him on this line of his march, were ill-timed ; certain it is, that they express their hatred of his successors with less reserve than I expected. At Bourg d'Oysans I saw a portrait of Louis XVIII. converted into an old smoker, *vis-à-vis* with Voltaire, who was made to grin at him ; and in a handsome apartment of the principal inn at Grenoble was a print of the Duchesse de Berry *en-ciente*, asleep, and near her a bust of the duke on a pedestal. A vision represented St. Louis pointing to a child, borne towards her by two angels. A diamond-scratch had been drawn on the glass which covered the print across all their throats. "The snake is scotched, not killed ;" the fire is smothered, not extinguished, and will long retain its heat and power of rekindling. Let the Bourbons be cautious, and not try its strength by blowing upon it too fiercely.\*

11th.—As my friend had not arrived this morning, I walked about the city, which, next to Paris and Lyons, is the finest that I have seen in France. It is beautifully situated on the Isère ; but I found little in it to interest me. In the square of St. André, which ought now to be called the Place Bayard, is a bronze statue of the che-

\* Five years afterwards the elder branch was driven from France : how many have the younger yet to stay ?

valier “sans peur et sans reproche,” recently erected by a subscription of the people of Dauphiny, aided by gifts from the king and the royal family. The attitude chosen by the artist, whose name I did not learn, is intended to represent the chevalier wounded and falling against a tree, upon which he supports himself with one hand, whilst he raises a sword with the other, but so awkwardly, that the hilt prevents his face from being seen, except in one position, where it is so much foreshortened, that the character and expression cannot be understood. The chevalier was born in this department (l’Isère), at a château, the ruins of which I am advised to visit, as it lies very little out of the road to Montmélian, by which we have proposed to reach the Little St. Bernard. Beneath the statue four tablets are inserted into the pedestal. The first records his battles; the second, the names of the men at arms in his company; the third, the persons who subscribed to the erection of this statue in the reign of Louis *le désiré*; the fourth is—To Bayard, who was born in the year 1476, and died at Rebecq in the year 1524, with, I suppose, a recorded speech of the chevalier, that God and the king were his only masters!

Stanfield arrived in the afternoon, delighted with his journey by the high road through Embrun and Gap.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Valley of Gresivaudan—Ponte Charra—Château Bayard—Frontier—Montmélian—St. Pierre d'Albigny—Château Moilans, Val Isère—L'Hôpital Conflans—Fonderie Royale—Moutiers—Cluse d'Haute-Cour—Ayme—St. Maurice—Valley of the Reclus—Roche Blanche—Passage of Hannibal—Hospice—Summit of the Little St. Bernard—Colonne de Joux—La Tuile—Scene of Hannibal's difficulty in descending from the Alps—Baths of St. Didier—Village Funeral—Aosta.

*Sept. 12th.*—We left Grenoble about two this afternoon, and ascended the left bank of the Isère, through the rich and fertile valley of Gresivaudan. The chain of mountains which terminate in Mont Grenier bound the valley on the right of the river. At nine o'clock we arrived at Ponte Charra, on the frontiers of Savoy, where we were welcomed by a very pretty landlady at the Auberge de la Paon; and where our excellent little supper, and delicious juice of the grape, contradicted the Piemontese proverb, that “an innkeeper who has a pretty wife sells bad wine.”

*13th.*—We were too late yesterday to visit the Château Bayard, on our way to Ponte Charra; we therefore walked back to see it this morning, whilst Jean Garda was arranging about the *holl* for his horse. We retraced the road to Grenoble about a mile, and then struck into a path on our left, and ascended the side of a hill, by which,

in about another mile, we attained the ruins of the château, celebrated as the birth-place of the chevalier, and not less deserving of celebrity for the beauty of its site. It commanded a most extensive view of the vale of Gresivaudan. On the opposite side of the valley is seen the Ford Barraud, which defends that frontier route into Dauphiny; beyond, the view is bounded by the chain of Mont d'Arpente, which terminates in Mont Granier; and on the right the plain extends to Chambéry. The valley upwards, above Montmélian, is closed by Mont la Tuile, and those masses more distant which extend up the Val Isère. Down the river, the mountains around Grenoble limit the view; but nothing can be imagined which surpasses the richness every where presented by cultivation in this fertile valley;—forests, vines, and corn, cover the land. During its days of glory the Château Bayard must have been a delicious residence. In the ruins, however, there is no interest but what arises from association with the chevalier himself: they are all unpicturesque, except those of the gateway or entrance to the terrace: the gardens are destroyed—the terrace can scarcely be defined; and during the events of the revolution, at the sales of national property, the whole would have been demolished, but, that a man (I wish I could give his name!) was found bold and generous enough to

buy it, to preserve what even yet remained of the birth-place of the hero of Dauphiny.

On our return we found that some difficulty had occurred in consequence of the douanier at Mont Genève having written Chapareillan instead of Ponte Charra on the *boll* delivered on the Mont Genève, the former place being the frontier town on the other side of the Isère towards Chambery. We succeeded, with a little management, in removing the difficulty. Soon after leaving Ponte Charra we arrived at the station of the *préposés* of Savoy: here we had again to execrate the delays thrown in our way by the examination of passports, bolls, and baggage — again the horse was measured and examined for his marks.

On inspecting the seat of the volantín two brace of pistols were found. One of the fellows seized these, and took them to the commandant to know if one pair would not be lawful prize: the commandant came to us, and learnt, that though we were now together, we had occasionally separated; and admitted, that though in Savoy arms were not necessary, in our journeys we might sometimes require them. I observed a rather sudden growth of civility in the party, which I did not at first understand. Whilst our things were repacking, my friend had amused himself by tossing up in his hand, so that they might observe it, a five-franc piece; this caught the eyes of the harpies,

and when we left them, each believed that his companion had it; but, after going about 200 yards, S., who had kept it in his hand, threw it up again in triumph, to their evident disappointment and mortification. We soon got into the great route of the Mont Cenis, upon which we entered about a mile above Montmélian. Here the view of this town and its old fort, the river, and the Val Isère, backed by the mountain of La Tuile, offered a strikingly picturesque scene. We descended to Montmélian to cross the Isère and pursue our course up its right bank to L'Hôpital. The excessive steepness of the street which led to this route rendered it very difficult to get up the volantín; this, however, was accomplished whilst we attended at the station of the carabineers to get our passports again countersigned. The route up the right bank of the Isère is very beautiful—the breadth of the river, the richness of its banks, and the woods and mountains, in some places aided by the ruins of castles and neat and delightfully situated villages, present a succession of picturesque scenes and objects of great interest.

At the little town of St. Pierre d'Albigny we rested and dined: the hostess wanted to bribe our guide to support her demand of twelve francs instead of six. He told her it was hopeless, as I was an old traveller. A little beyond St. Pierre we passed one of the finest ruined châteaux on the

route, that of Moilans. It is placed on the point of a rock which juts out from the mountain-side, in a commanding situation. Early in the 16th century this castle was purchased by a duke of Savoy, and made the state prison. The same richness in the soil and scenery for which the valley of the Isère is so celebrated, prevailed all the way to L'Hôpital Conflans.

We were a little surprised, on arriving at L'Hôpital, to find a town well lit with lamps, having good inns, and an appearance of cleanliness and comfort, which reminded us of home. At the first inn, chez Geny frères, the house was too much occupied for our accommodation, chiefly by an English nobleman, who had just arrived with his family and suite, and having a daughter with him who was an invalid ; we therefore withdrew to another inn, kept by a young couple who had recently commenced business, where every thing was excellent, and served with great civility and attention.

14th.—On leaving L'Hôpital we crossed the river Arly, near its confluence with the Isère, to Conflans, which is situated on the left bank of the river, though with L'Hôpital it properly forms only one town. Near it we visited the royal smelting-houses and foundery, where the silver of the state is obtained from the ore ; there were no workmen at present, and the fires were extinct.

The king, in his recent *progress* through his duchy of Savoy, visited L'Hôpital, when, for his amusement, and to raise, if possible, his notions of self-importance, his *fonderie royale* was set to work. The people appeared to have been made very happy by his visit, and to remember the holyday which it afforded with much pleasure.

The valley of the Isère at Conflans turns off abruptly at a right angle, which extends to Moutiers-Tarentaise. Above this place its course is again nearly parallel with the vale of Gresivaudan. The same beautiful scenery and high cultivation extends to Moutiers, but with some variation where the valley becomes narrower; it is, however, as richly wooded, and old feudal remains are still seen in commanding situations on the mountain-side. Before arriving at the neat little village of Aigue-Blanche, there is a fine scene where a cataract dashes down amidst immense rocks; a spot which forms a striking contrast with the quiet and beautiful scenes through which we had just passed. From Aigue-Blanche to Moutiers the road has been admirably made on the side of a ravine, which, at its termination, discloses the capital of the Tarentaise, in the midst of a little plain surrounded by mountains. Its salines or salt-works are buildings of singular construction for the evaporation of the water which is conducted through them from the salt-springs: there are



four such houses, each above 1000 feet long and 25 feet high. Nearly three million pounds of salt are annually obtained from these works. Bakewell, in his "Tour in the Tarentaise," gives an excellent account of Moutiers and these salines.

After taking refreshment, we proceeded on our route up the course of the Isère: we soon passed the village of St. Marcel, and a little beyond it ascended by a road which is carried high above the torrent, over the brow of a rock that perpendicularly overhangs the narrow gorge through which the Isère struggles at the depth of several hundred feet. Formerly the road, or rather path, that led to the valley above this gorge, was carried over the rocks on the other side of the river. The view from the summit of this pass, into the bed of the Isère, and of the village of St. Marcel, is very singular. This place is called the Cluse d'Haute-Cour; the parish in which it is situated, and of which the little church can be just seen on the left, high above the road, is that of Mont Jerou. We were told that the land above us lay in flat terraces, and was very productive in corn. The road of Haute-Cour was made by order of Charles Emanuel III. in 1766. Bakewell calls this gorge *Le Saut de la Pucelle*. These young ladies appear to have chosen places for their feats as difficult to attain as to escape from.

Beyond this gorge the country began to assume an appearance of sterility when compared with the valley below it. We left on the right the village of Centron,—a name which marks the locality of the Centrones, a people who inhabited the upper valley,—and proceeded to Ayme, the ancient Aimæ; but believed by antiquaries to be also the Forum Claudii Centronum. M. J. Roche, of Moutiers, has particularly investigated this subject in his *Notices Historiques sur les anciens Centrons*. Ayme is a little market-town, where we rested our horse long enough to make our arrival at Bourg St. Maurice late. We had a very narrow escape from a serious accident at this place. Just before we entered the town, we crossed a wooden bridge above a torrent, which our conductor Jean drove over so carelessly, that the wheels on my side of the volantín were within two inches of the edge of the board. When I looked down upon the foaming torrent, I gave an alarm; and before we had passed over, our escape was as narrow from such an accident by the sudden change to the other side: there was no parapet or railing on either to protect us. We afterwards learnt that we had gone over a temporary bridge, and, as it was dark, our escape was considered by our host of St. Maurice as a miracle.

15th.—We returned to the scene of danger

which we had escaped last night, and felt grateful that our journey had not closed here. Guarda's horse was beginning to feel the effects of his constant labour; we therefore engaged a man, who, with the assistance of two others, agreed to convey our carriage, without dismounting it, across the pass of the Little Saint Bernard, and to furnish another horse for the journey. We started in the volantín, and after crossing the torrent which descends from the Glacier d'Oratoire by Chapieu, reached Scez, where we left the valley of the Isère, to ascend that of the Reclus. The villainous condition of the road induced us to avoid the chance offered to us of being converted into jelly by the jolts of our carriage. My friend mounted Jean Guarda's horse, and I walked on, leaving the party that we had hired to follow us. After ascending through the village of Villars, by a narrow and rugged road, we reached the head of the little plain or valley, which terminates in an immense mass of gypsum, called the Roche Blanche, that rises on the left bank of the Reclus. At its base, this torrent escapes by a deep rift. Below the Roche Blanche, the valley of the Reclus spreads out into meadows and pasturages, where a rude chapel bears the name, a common one in the Alps, of *Notre Dame des Neiges*. A bridge now crosses the torrent close to the Roche Blanche. Formerly the road from the

Little St. Bernard, below the rock, followed the course of the stream on its right bank ; but the path was much exposed to *éboulemens* from the steep sides of Mont de Scez. The character of this part of the country is entirely adapted to the events of Hannibal's passage as related by Polybius. Without such guides as Magillus and his associates, the more obvious and direct course up the greater valley, the Val Isère, would have been pursued. The whole way that we had passed, from the gorge of Haute-Cour, bore the appearance of a course in which the army of Hannibal might have been assailed, especially in a spot close by Centron ; and in the Mont de Scez. The whole right bank of the Reclus, from Scez to the Roche Blanche, is commanded by a height of from 200 to 300 feet, which slopes from 40 to 50 degrees, whence missiles thrown and stones rolled down would have been most destructive to an army passing below. Much of this danger might be avoided by traversing the plain of Villars, and ascending the Little St. Bernard on the left bank of the Reclus, passing around and behind the Roche Blanche, where a party stationed to cover the army might effectually accomplish its protection : this Polybius clearly states was done by Hannibal. Whilst I was sketching the Rock, a respectable-looking man on horseback stopped, and, addressing me, said :

“That, sir, is the Roche Blanche; formerly a great general, called Hannibal, passed this way with his army, and fought a great battle here.” The inquiry into this historical event, to determine the line of Hannibal’s march, has carried his name into almost every pass of the Alps. Little value, therefore, can be attached to tradition; but its absence might fairly be brought in evidence against any theory. The examination of the scenes connected with the events of Hannibal’s passage, was my first inducement to undertake this excursion: it struck me as odd, that none of the disputants gave views of the places and objects connected with those events, as their fitness, without any regard to the picturesque, could better be shewn in a sketch than proved in a volume.

In the surveys of this pass which were made under Napoleon, in contemplation of the formation of a carriage-road across the Little St. Bernard, the engineers were led to decide upon the old Roman road as the intended line. Now, however, a steep and fatiguing zig-zag path leads up to the village of St. Germain, where, in spite of its great elevation, walnut, apple, and plum-trees, are found, and bear fruit, though scanty and stunted. Above St. Germain the road ascends gradually; and as we saw there was assistance enough to bring forward the volantin, we proceeded towards the hospice, and left them to follow us.

From the highest part of the road, whence we could look back on the valley of the Isère, which we had ascended yesterday, the scene was magnificent: Scez and St. Maurice were below us, with the road winding down to St. Germain, and the side of the Roche Blanche overhanging the deep torrent of the Reclus, and beyond these the “alps o’er alps,” which divide the Tarentaise from the Maurienne; and again we saw, and it was the most beautiful object in the scene, the remarkable mountain—its form could never be mistaken—mentioned in our descent to Chapieu from the Bonhomme.\* We observed it also yesterday, when opposite to the valley of Pesay, celebrated for its silver mines, which are situated near the glaciers of this mountain, the Vanoise. High poles were placed at certain intervals on the road up the Little St. Bernard; a necessary precaution, to point out the path when it is deeply covered with snow.

At the hospice, which we reached, after much loitering, in six hours, we found no monks, but a decent man and his family, who furnished wine, and bread and cheese, and meat if required, to the travellers who crossed the mountain. His wife was a fine interesting woman, who seemed out of place here,—too gentle for her rugged and exposed habitation. She was the only woman

\* See page 28.

that I had seen look well in the singular head-dress of the Tarentaise, which it is difficult to describe. Her husband was a sturdy mountaineer. They had several children, as hardy as the lichens on their rocks. One little urchin, not three years old, was ordered to display his vocal powers, in calling the cows from the mountains: his loud and shrill shout was deafening. Beds may, in case of necessity, be had here; but the greater part of the buildings of the hospice were destroyed in the contest between the French and the Austro-Sardinians, in the year 1794. Prior to that time it had been held by some monks of the Great St. Bernard. The man now in the occupation of it is appointed by the Sardinian government. The poor traveller is assisted gratis, but those who can afford to pay are charged as at an inn. Life in the winter can scarcely be endurable here; and we could not help pitying the destiny of our gentle hostess.

The hospice is situated near the brink of the descent into the Tarentaise, whence to the other extremity of the plain, which forms the summit of the pass of the Little St. Bernard, the distance is about a league, and its width is about a mile; on each side it is bounded by high mountains. We rested at the hospice until our party arrived with the vehicle, when, leaving them to refresh, we started across the col for our descent into Pie-

mont. The great chain of the Alps which passes through the dominions of the King of Sardinia is the line of demarcation between Savoy, which lies on the western side, and Piemont, on the eastern side of the High Alps.

At the distance of nearly a mile from the hospice, on the plain of the col, is a column known by the name of the Colonne de Joux. It is a shaft, without a capital or base, about twenty feet high, and three feet diameter at five feet from the ground; a small iron cross has been stuck on the top, a religious emblem which has, perhaps, preserved the column from destruction. It is of the variety of marble known by the name of Cipolino, of which great quantities are found in the neighbouring mountain of the Cramont. In the scene from the plain of the Little St. Bernard, Mont Blanc is a fine feature, as it appears towering over the Cramont and other intermediate mountains. At the base of the nearest of these is the little Lake of Vernai, which has been described as upon the Little St. Bernard. It is one of the sources of the Doire, and the streams from the northern side of this pass flow into it. It, however, occupies no part of the plain, but lies at the base of the neighbouring mountain, and far below the commencement of the descent to La Tuile.

From the northern extremity of the col the road winds down by a difficult path amidst blocks



of tufa, which continue almost as far as Pont Serrant. This village, the first on the Piemontese side of the pass, owes its name to a wooden bridge a little below it, which is thrown across a frightful chasm, where, at the depth of 250 feet, the torrent is seen foaming in its course towards the open valley. The ravine over which this bridge is thrown is only twelve paces across from rock to rock. In approaching it, no appearance of a gulf presented itself, until we were within a few feet of it, and then it seemed more like a *haw-haw* in a pleasure-ground. From Pont Serrant we soon reached La Tuile, by a tolerable mule-road. We had again descended to cultivation, and the walls on each side of the road protected fields of barley. We scarcely entered the village of La Tuile, which lay on our right, on the banks of the torrent that descends from the great glacier of the Ruitor, and falls here into the Doire. Turning abruptly to the left, we followed the stream a little way, then crossing it, ascended far above the river on its right bank, by a new road, which has, within these fifty years, been cut out of the rock on this side, to avoid the danger of descending by the old road, which lay much lower in the ravine, and on the other side. This is supposed to be the site of the difficulties that arose from the snow which the army of Hannibal encountered in its descent of the Alps. There was no snow now accumulated

in the ravine ; but the difficulty of passing by the old road, when the avalanches from the Cramont thus choked it up, can be readily understood by any one who has observed the place.

Our route continued high above the torrent ; but the day closed rapidly upon us. The moonlight which brightened the upper parts of the pine-forest through which we descended, served only to make the blackness of the parts of the ravine in shadow more intense. At length, by a zig-zag path we sunk into the depths of this glen, and crossed the river at La Balme. On the left bank, the darkness still destroyed all variety in the scenery. A peasant, with a scythe on his shoulder, came abruptly upon us, and roused in us the suspicion that he was a “ knight of the moon ;” but it was unjust. We were, however, without guides, in a strange land, and by night, and these may be offered as excuses for the precaution of ascertaining that our pistols were in order. After again crossing and re-crossing the Doire, we found ourselves high above the torrent, which, even in the stillness of the night, could scarcely be heard, as it passed in the deep abyss beneath us, and entered an immense rift, or chasm, in the mountain, to seek its shortest course into the valley of Pré St. Didier. We soon afterwards found ourselves descending by a steep road ; the haze in the valley indicated its extension into the little plain

of St. Didier ; and we soon afterwards found ourselves in the occupation of a comfortable fireside at the Auberge de l'Ours.

16th.—Cries of distress awoke us this morning : the tolling of the bell, and the evident preparations for a funeral by the assembled visitors in white vestments over their usual dress, assured us of a village mortality. The answer to our inquiries in the inn was, “ The mother of this house is gone to another world.” She had lived in this auberge till 84 years of age. A numerous attendance in this last public duty towards her was evidence of the regard in which this village chronicle was held : above ninety persons in funeral dresses, beside others, bore this testimony to their respect for her character.

From the windows of our inn Mont Blanc appeared in all his majesty and magnificence ; his form was splendidly lit up by the morning sun, his enduring and enormous snows and glaciers shone brightly against the deep blue of a cloudless sky ; and it was so entirely free from mist, that the light edges of the snow cut the firmament as sharply as if it had been an object of lesser magnitude within a few feet of us, or as if it had been presented to us without the intervention of air. This grand and impressive view of Mont Blanc, seen from the window, where we also overlooked the villagers at their sad and

sacred rites, was a subject for a burst of poetical feeling from such a pen as Byron's; for the reflection naturally swept o'er the mind, that Mont Blanc, unchanged in countless ages, marked, in striking contrast, the endurance here of man but for a moment, though the great age which the old landlady had attained was mentioned with surprise, respect, and gratitude.

We were uneasy last night that our volantin had not arrived; but this morning, about eight o'clock, we had the satisfaction of seeing it in safety. Our things had not suffered much from the jolting, though they had a little from Jean Guarda's *geologising*: he had collected some pieces of coal near Gap, on his journey with my friend; and as, he said, nobody in his valley would believe that "earth would burn like a candle," he had taken some with him to convince them of the wonders which he had seen in his journey. The men whom we had hired to bring the carriage from St. Maurice had rested for the night at La Tuile. Whilst they breakfasted at St. Didier, my friend and I walked to the hot springs about half a mile from the village. The Doire is crossed at the base of some immense rocks, called the Mont des Bains, which overhang, at an appalling height, the house into which the hot water is conducted for the service of the invalids. We ascended the ravine to the source,

where the water escapes from the spring at a temperature of above 90 degrees. We were surprised to see a frog enjoying himself in the warm stream. Close to this spring, the torrent of the Doire issues from the deep rift in the mountains into which we last night observed that it entered. The view of Mont Blanc, the Géant, the Grand Jorasse, and the pinnacles, glaciers, and snows, of this most elevated portion of the great chain, seen from the baths, is magnificent beyond description.

About ten o'clock we left Pré St. Didier, and soon after, crossing by a good bridge the waters of the Doire which descend from Mont Blanc, entered again upon our route of the 18th of August, in the valley of Aosta, between Courmayeur and Morges. On our way through La Salle, we saw our dirty old acquaintance at the "Rose à bon logis;" we reminded her of the "dodizy liri," but resisted her coaxing invitations to renew our enjoyments at her house. A *char-à-banc*, with two Englishmen, followed us closely as we descended the valley; and upon resting on our route, under a trellis of vines in front of an inn, to refresh our horse, they rested also. Our guide said, with surprise, "They are your countrymen, and you have not spoken to them—what queer people you are!" I excused our reluctance to make the acquaintance of our countrymen abroad, from our ignorance of their characters at home,

This does  
not agree  
with his  
habitués  
notions  
in page 13

and from our conviction, that many of them pass their time at liberty, out of England, whose peregrinations at home would be confined to the wards of a prison, either upon the felon's or the debtor's side. Jean thought our suspicions unreasonable; and as they laid no restraint upon him, he made their acquaintance at once, and assured us afterwards that they were *braves hommes*.

We arrived early enough at Aosta to take a peep again at the Roman remains. Thanks to our guide, he had taken us to the Ecu de Valais, and we thus avoided the dirty Hôtel de la Poste, of which we had some unpleasant recollections. It happened that our fellow-travellers, but not companions, had arrived also at our hotel, and we were requested, by a buxom servant girl, to join them at dinner; to this we acceded, and an acquaintance was made, where we had before been, of course, mutually shy. They were, a major in the English service going to Turin, and a Scotch clergyman, Mr. C., who was going by the Great St. Bernard to Geneva. We passed a short time with them very pleasantly, thanks to the girl who brought us together: her object had been to save trouble, and gain profit, by waiting upon one party instead of two, and making the dinner prepared for two serve for four. Jean Guarda appeared to be perfectly at home here; our hostess happened to be related to him, and Jean was a

little in the family secrets; for he made some provoking inquiries of our buxom attendant about her frequent visits to the hospice of St. Bernard; he said that she never missed a fête, and often made one; and joked her, without much refinement, about her acquaintance with the prior. His insinuations, which we could not misunderstand, brought into her countenance an odd mixture of blushes and effrontery. We shall here have to part with our worthy conductor, who has been to us most obliging, attentive, and amusing. We have hired a *char-à-banc* to take us to St. Remy to-morrow morning, on our way to the Great St. Bernard.

## CHAPTER IX.

Ascent to the Great St. Bernard—Hospice—Courtesies and Character of the Monks—Their Resources—Travellers—Records of Visitors in the Travellers' Book—The Chapel—The Morgue—Scene from the Hospice—Temple of Jupiter—Ancient History of the Pass—Foundation of the Hospice—Its History in the Middle Ages—Present State.

*Sept. 17th.*—Jean Guarda returned this morning to his home at Chatillon, driving the major down the valley; our new Scotch friend had started before us on horseback for the hospice. On our leaving the valley of Aosta, we again met with some horridly goîtred objects; to escape from them lessened our regret on leaving the beautiful Val d'Aosta, peopled as it is by a filthy race, upon whom a physical blight seems to have fallen; and the impolicy of the Sardinian government withholds the only chance of remedy, the formation of a good road over the Little St. Bernard, which, by opening a free communication between Piemont and Savoy, both within its territories, would, by giving them more employment and property, and the example of the cleaner and healthier habits of other people, remove the chief, if not the only



cause of their physical debility—a sort of hydrophobia—a hatred of water and cleanliness.

There is little to interest in the scenery from Aosta to the hospice, except the beautiful view on looking back upon the city, where it lies deeply seated in its valley, and surrounded by lofty mountains, especially that of the Soana, whose snows were now resplendent in the morning sun. Near St. Gignod we had a fine peep into the Val Pellina; but the rest of the road to St. Remy was uninteresting. At Etroubles our passports were examined, before our departure from the states of Sardinia. The road to the hospice is practicable for a char, even to its doors; but as it is very steep above St. Remy, mules are usually provided. This is desirable where parties return the same day to St. Remy, as the horse from Aosta then rests at St. Remy until the return of the travellers; and, in general, the passage of the mountain is so frequent, that the conductors of return chars to Aosta wait as late as possible for the chance of employment back. At St. Remy we had refreshment of excellent wine, eggs, bread, and butter, and served by a beautiful little girl, the daughter of the innkeeper—an Ariel among the Calibans of her village. Whilst we took refreshment, mules were sought for: they are usually at hand, but to-day they were all employed in gathering in the harvest, or in bringing wine from Aosta:

however, in about an hour two were procured; for a charge of six francs, they were to take us to the hospice; or if we chose to retain them to proceed to Liddes, on the Valais side of the mountain, to-morrow, we are to pay eighteen francs.

On leaving St. Remy, a boll was necessary for the mules, as at Cesanne; but the *préposé* was very civil. I endeavoured to acknowledge this by a piece of money, which he surprised me by refusing: we began to think that their incivility at Val Tournanche was an exception to their general character in Piemont. We ascended through scenes of great wildness, and entered the plain of the Vacherie, where the cattle of the hospice pasture. A road winds around this place, to render the ascent to the summit more gradual: on attaining it, we suddenly entered a gorge at a great elevation, whence the mountains, rising above each other, present to the observer a sublime panorama. Here we saw the hospice, on the opposite side of the lake, which is formed in a basin on the summit of this pass. The establishment occupies the actual crest, at an elevation of about 8,200 English feet above the level of the sea.

We dismounted to make sketches of the scene where the lake lay between us and the hospice; the Mont Velan, ribbed with glaciers, formed the background to our view. Whilst we were thus engaged, Mr. C., the Scotch clergyman, who had

reached the hospice sometime before, came down to welcome us, and was rewarded with something which brought tears in his eyes, from its strength, or the associations with home which it excited—a drop of real Glenlivet, which my friend has still saved, out of all its waste and perils, to drink to those at home on the last summit of the Alps which we should cross this year. The time had arrived, and our new friend was a welcome and gratified participator in, probably, the only whisky that was ever drank on the Great St. Bernard.

The scene around us was nearly closed in by mountains, peaks, and rocks, which descend even to the hospice: upon the latter of these, bordering the lake, lay large patches of snow, from which it is rarely free throughout the year. The spot was wild beyond imagination, and combined features of the sublime and the beautiful, to which we were impatient to add a third—the *social*—which, even in this wilderness in the clouds, we received from the kind and gentlemanly attentions of the monks of St. Bernard. They were at their duties in the chapel when we entered; but we were welcomed by a fine, respectable-looking servant, Victor, who realised the proverb, “like master like man;”—he was one of the fittest precursors to their hospitality that I ever saw. In a few minutes he placed refreshment before us, and said

that we should be expected at six o'clock to sup with the brethren. The decent, unpretending kindness of this welcome delighted us. We were soon after greeted by some of the monks : and surprised to see them all young men, at least none were forty. We learnt that they volunteer into this kind and devoted service at eighteen years of age : their vows are for fifteen years to this duty ; but few are robust enough to bear the severities of the winter at this height, without feeling their effects in broken constitutions and ruined health.

In the summer of 1816 the ice of the lake never melted, and not a week passed without snow falling : the severest cold recorded was 29 deg. below the zero of Fahrenheit,—it has often been observed at 18 and 20 deg. below. The greatest heat has been 68 deg. of Fahrenheit ; but even in the height of summer it always freezes early in the morning. The hospice is rarely four months clear of snow : its average depth around the building is seven or eight feet, and sometimes the drifts accumulate to the height of forty feet against the hospice. The entrance, for this reason, is attained by a flight of steps, which lead to what may be called the first floor ; below, are the stables, store-rooms for wood, &c. This leads to a corridor, and thence into various offices ; on the floor above, another corridor leads to the chapel, the refectory, the separate chambers for the re-

ligieux, and extensive accommodation for travellers, in which the neatness and comfort of the arrangements add greatly to an Englishman's enjoyment of his reception. One chamber is devoted to visitors, especially the ladies ; it may be considered as the *drawing-room* of the establishment. To decorate this room, travellers have presented to the hospice prints and drawings, and even a pianoforte has been added to the means of enjoyment here. A cabinet is attached to this chamber, which contains collections made by the monks of the plants and minerals around the Great St. Bernard, and antiques from the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter, which formerly stood on this mountain. These consist of votive tablets and figures in bronze and other metals, arms, and coins, and are a great resource to the visitors at the hospice, if the weather should be unfavourable enough to detain them within its walls.

The perilous passage of these mountains is more frequently undertaken in the winter than is generally imagined : it is difficult to conceive the necessity or urgency of affairs which can lead persons, at such a season, through such scenes of danger. They are generally pedlars or smugglers, who mount the pass from either side, in defiance of the snows, tourmentes, and avalanches of these high regions. During the severe cold of winter the snow at this elevation forms and falls

like dust ; it congeals so soon, and so hard, that the particles do not attach and form flakes when they touch, as in lower regions ; and instead of consolidating beneath the pressure of the traveller's feet, they rise around him in powder, and he sinks to his middle. These snow-storms, when accompanied by violent winds, are called *tourmentes*, and are often fatal to the poor wretches who encounter them ; unable then to trace the path, they wander and fall over precipices. The avalanches, too, take their share of victims. The summer avalanche is caused by the submelting of the snow, which undermines its support ; and the mass, once set in motion, descends with great violence. The avalanches of winter are occasioned by the masses of snow accumulating on the slopes of the mountains, where it is too dry to attach firmly ; and when the weight of snow exceeds the supporting resistance of the surface of the ground, it slides off into the valley below, with a suddenness and violence which the monks who described it compared to the discharge of a cannon-ball : these are the sort of avalanches which in the winter render the approach to the hospice very dangerous. Near the convent the mountains are steep, and the traveller is exposed to almost certain destruction, if an avalanche fall whilst he passes ; and the poor wretch, buried beneath the mass, is found only when the snow melts, and the summer, which

to him never returns, discovers the victim in these regions of winter. Under every circumstance in which it is possible to render assistance, the worthy monks of St. Bernard set out upon their regularly appointed duties. Undismayed by the spirit of the storm, and obeying a higher Power, they seek, amidst the greatest dangers, the exhausted or overwhelmed traveller; they are generally accompanied by their dogs. The sagacity of these animals is so extraordinary, that they too, as if conscious of their performing a high duty, will roam alone the day and night through in those desolate regions, discover the victim buried in the snow, and lie on him and lick him to impart warmth. They bear with them some refreshing liqueur around their necks for the poor traveller whom they may find, if he should have still sense enough left to use it; they then bark or howl—their signals for assistance, or, if the distance be too great, return to seek it. These valuable and noble animals have often deserved gold collars from the Humane Society. At present there are only four of these dogs at the convent. Not long since a mortality prevailed among them, and they had almost become extinct.

The number of resident monks is now twelve: they all, except the principal, work at the common duties of their establishment; they have five or six resident domestics, besides some at the

vacherie, and in other services of the hospice. The religious order of the monks on the St. Bernard is that of St. Augustin, of which the distinguishing badge is a white narrow band, with an open slit some way along the middle. This is passed over the head, and hangs like a chain from the shoulders; the ends are tucked, before and behind, into a black broad girdle, which is worn round the middle. Their dress is a long black cloth tunic, with sleeves which fit close. On the head they wear a pyramidal cap with a tuft at the top: the whole dress is gentlemanly and becoming.

At supper we were placed at the head of the table; it was Friday; the soup, though *maigre*, was excellent—the fish, pieces of salt cod, dressed with cream and currants, delicious omelettes, cheese and fruit, completed our repast. The *vin ordinaire* was good, and an extra bottle was served to us of some delicious Italian wine. Their courteous and polite attentions to their guests were those which would indicate more social intercourse with the world than they can have had; and we received this kindness, in regions otherwise inhospitable, from men whose habits might have been monkish and secluded, instead of their being the dispensers of such refreshing and unexpected manna as they offered to us in this wilderness. The conversation at table was general and most rational. It had no



restraint but in the respect which their characters and conduct commanded. Their information was more extensive than I had expected to find it upon the state of literature and science in the world they had left. This they derive from the periodical works of some academic bodies which are sent to them: they have a small library, principally composed of theological works. Much of their knowledge is acquired by their intercourse with their visitors, which during the short summer at the hospice is extensive, and, among the crowd, many respectable and well-informed travellers furnish them with information. There is a propriety in their inquiries, and an apparent interest in the affairs of mankind in their conversation, which, except that it is entirely free from discontent and affectation, would induce the traveller to imagine that their cells sometimes heard their sighs for a freer intercourse with the world. In reply to some questions which I put to the prior about the state of their funds, and the report which had prevailed in England that the absence of Napoleon from the political world had lessened their resources, he informed me that their finances were now in a flourishing condition, and that Buonaparte rather impoverished than enriched them. It is true that he had assisted them with donations; but his claims upon them for the purveyance of his soldiers had exceeded

these benefits—they had had 40 men quartered upon them for months together, and 60,000 had passed by the hospice and been assisted in one year. Now, however, the prior said, their resources were increasing: the peace of Europe enabled those strangers to visit the hospice who travelled for pleasure, and could afford to aid their funds. Those who can pay, though no charge is made, usually deposit something in the box in the chapel of the convent, which is rarely less than the parties would have paid at an inn; the poor traveller is always fed and lodged gratis.

After our arrival to-day, not fewer than ten other visitors reached the hospice in three parties. An English young married couple, with two friends, passing the honeymoon in Switzerland and Savoy—an Englishman and his wife, with their children, a son and daughter, about twelve or fourteen years old. These remained in the drawing-room, an apartment particularly appropriated to their visitors when there were ladies in the party. We did not visit them, as for once we preferred the society of the monks. The third party was an intolerable young puppy, an Englishman; he came with his servant, who wore the dress of a courier. This precious specimen of the worst produce of our country, entered the room with vulgar discourtesy, as if he had done the hospice

prodigious honour in condescending to come there at all; returned uncivil looks to the proffered kindness of the monks, flung himself into an arm-chair, and giving to another the honour of supporting his legs, wrapt himself up in his ignorant, or, as he of course thought, dignified silence, until his servant entered to tell him that his room and refreshment were ready, when he ordered a *fire* in his chamber. This almost upset the tranquillity of the kind-hearted principal, who, after the puppy had retired, hinted to us, with more delicacy than the *object* deserved, that the last was the heaviest claim he could make upon their hospitality, as the difficulty of procuring fuel is very great. The whole hospice is warmed by an apparatus which renders particular fires at this season unnecessary in the chambers: it certainly was not needed by the young and healthy coxcomb who had ordered what ought to have been reserved for an invalid, the traveller in winter, or to render more endurable to themselves the severities of the awful situation to which they were generously devoted for the service of others. Not a bush is to be found near the hospice, and the wood for its service is obtained from the forest of Ferret, a distance of nearly four leagues. The consumption of wood is very great; for at the hospice, owing to its great elevation, water boils at a temperature considerably less than on a level

with the sea: this is so unfavourable for the concoction of meat, that it requires longer boiling, and, of course, a greater quantity of fuel is consumed.

One of the parties arrived late, between nine and ten o'clock. The night was calm and beautiful, and so warm for this elevation, that we enjoyed looking out of the window upon the still and deep and solemn scene which surrounded us. One of the brethren said, "There is company ascending the mountain on the Swiss side;" but, silent as the grave as every thing was around us, our ears were not susceptible of such nice distinctions of sound: he said that they were very distant. He was right: the party with the children arrived long enough after to astonish us at the perception which he must have had of their approach.

A book at the hospice contains an amusing record of visitors, characters, and opinions. Here it has been kept for several years; and I hope that it may long be sacred, and that the practice of stealing autographs will never extend its sacrilege to the convent of the Great St. Bernard. It has, however, been done to such an extent in other places, that whole books have been stolen; and an entire one can scarcely now be found upon the usual routes of travellers, where, only three years ago, no person dared to detach a leaf. At St. Martin's, Salanches, Chamouny, &c. the visitors' books have

been violated for autographs, with the same recklessness that certain *illustrators* tore out portraits and effigies, some time ago, from printed works, to gratify a mania, for which they deserved the galleys.

The travellers' book on the St. Bernard is a source of amusement to all visitors. Here the divine, the actor, the man of science, the merchant, the man of rank, and the idler, have united in a general acknowledgment of the urbanity of these kind-hearted monks, whose profession is humanity, and who practise true Christianity. The divine has done justice to their worth, by forgetting his prejudices against their religious precepts in a recorded admiration of their practised duties ; an actor, charmed by their cheerfulness, leaves in the book his avowal that he has passed at the Great St. Bernard " the happiest day of his life ;" \* the philosopher's memorial thanks them for the kind interest which they took, and the assistance which they rendered him in some delicate scientific experiments ; the merchant who visits them in his six weeks' journey of pleasure, writes *ditto* to some praise of their kindness ; and the painter, the poet, and the lord, leave their sketches, verses, and names, in the universal desire to acknowledge their gratification and their thanks. What execration then does that selfish being

\* Kean's autograph.

deserve who can rob a thousand persons of the pleasure of reading these memorials in their original locality ! Yet some have even been found to boast of their *luck* in possessing such stolen autographs, without blushing for the heartless thefts by which they had been obtained.

We retired early to rest. The chamber in which we slept was long and narrow ; it contained three excellent beds, with curtains, and double windows. Every thing was clean to Flemish niceness ; and even some of the usual requisites of an English toilet were placed on the table.

18th.—We arose early, visited the chapel, and dropped our donations into the box. The principal object of visitors in the chapel, is the tomb of Dessaix, who fell at Marengo. It was placed here by order of Napoleon, who is said to have laid the first stone ; and ordered a medal to be struck in commemoration of the hero : the cenotaph erected on the spot where he fell has been removed by the Sardinian government, to the dishonour of the violators.

Before our departure from the hospice we visited the *morgue*, a little stone hovel, the receptacle of the dead : it is a few yards only from the hospice. Here the bodies of the unfortunate people who have perished in these mountains have been placed, left with their clothes on, to assist the recognition by their friends, if they have any. In

these high regions there is scarcely soil enough to bury them ; and it is impossible to break it up where the frosts are so intense. Here they have been placed just as they were found ; and upon looking through the grated windows, the bodies are seen in the postures in which they perished. Here they have “dried up and withered ;” for the evaporation is so rapid at this height, that the foulness of mortality is less offensive than in warmer situations ; and the bodies are long preserved, owing to their having dried without decay. Upon some the clothes had remained after eighteen years, though tattered like a gibbet-wardrobe. Some of these bodies presented a horrid aspect ; part of the bones of the head were exposed and blanched, whilst black integuments were attached to other parts of the face : we particularly remarked this in a sitting peasant. A mother and her child were among the latest victims ; several bodies were standing against the wall, upon the accumulated heaps of miserable predecessors, presenting an appalling scene. This receptacle contained two chambers ; the air freely traversed both, without bearing to the nostrils of the observer at the grate the foul evidence of its transition through these dreadful regions of the dead. On one side of the cells was a walled enclosure, where there was a great accumulation of bones, white, broken, and apparently the gathering of ages. They might be removed

and buried in the summer; but they are left to their long decay by the monks, probably from a religious feeling, to have before them these memorials of mortality.

The convent is massive, strong, and well adapted to its perilous situation, which is on the very highest point of the pass, where it is exposed to tremendous storms from the north-east and south-west. On the north-west it is sheltered by the Mont Chenelletaz, and in an opposite direction by the Mont Mort. There is no mountain which bears the name of the St. Bernard. Like that of the St. Gothard, the name is only given to the pass. The chief building is capable of accommodating 70 or 80 travellers with beds: 300 may be sheltered; and between 500 and 600 have received assistance in one day. Besides this, there is a house near the hospice on the other side of the way; it was built as a place of refuge in case of fire—an event which has twice happened here since the foundation of the establishment. It bears the name of the Hôtel de St. Louis, which was given in compliment to the kings of France, whose protection was often extended to the hospice. It is chiefly used for offices, and by the domestics of the establishment.

Looking back towards the valley of Aosta, the scene is sterile and dreary: patches of snow lie all the year round on the rocky slopes which sweep down from the mountains to the lake of the



hospice; and beyond its waters, and over the unseen valley of the vacherie, the pinnaced summit of the *Pain de Sucre*, with its rocks and snows, add to the dreary aspect of the scene. About half-way on the road which borders the lake, a column stands, which now marks the frontiers of Piemont and the Valais. Above and beyond it lies the little plain, or rather platform, for plain conveys an idea of extent which does not properly apply to a spot scarcely larger than sufficient for the site of the Temple dedicated to Jupiter, which formerly stood here; its foundations may still be traced. From it a Roman road led down on the Piemontese side of the pass. There are remains of the massive pavement of this road, and it may be traced also in the hewn rock; but of the temple itself not a vestige remains above the surface. The period of its foundation is unknown; but many of the bronze votive tablets which have been found in its ruins appear to be of great antiquity: they were placed in the temple and on the altars by travellers, in gratitude for their escape from perils in their journey across these Alps. Some are inscribed to a god Penninus, others to Jupiter. This difference arose probably from the nation of the devotee; for when the Romans became acquainted with this pass, the worship of Jupiter for that of Penninus was a change only in name, and

Penninus was preserved with that of Jupiter after they had extended their conquests beyond these Alps. The religious worship, if not the temple, had long been established upon these heights. From the fragments, however, which have been found of the temple, it appears to have been a Roman work of a time probably not earlier than that of Augustus. Under the younger Constantine, in the year 339, a military column was substituted for the statue of Jupiter; but this was not, probably, the period of the destruction of the temple; for medals of the children of Theodosius have been found there of a date fifty years later. Chretien de Loges, in his *Essais Historiques sur le Mont St. Bernard*, has conjectured that the temple was destroyed by the Huns and Vandals during their ravages; for it was not in existence when the Lombards traversed these Alps in the year 574.

The name of this mountain, or rather of this range of the *Pennine* Alps, is generally admitted to be of Celtic origin, from *pen*, or *penn*, a height, a term still preserved in Cornwall and Wales, as in *Pendennis* and *Penmaenmawr*. Those, however, who have absurdly sought to establish the passage of Hannibal by the Great St. Bernard, have derived its name from the Pœni, whom he commanded. The territories of the Veragri extended to the summit of this pass, which was the barrier between them and the Salassi, a people of the

Upper Val d'Aosta. Livy states, that on this mountain the Veragri worshipped a god of the Alps, Penninus, or Jupiter Penninus; and one of the earliest names for this passage of the Alps was Mons Jovis, or Mons Jovis Penninus; this was gallicised into Mont Joux, by which it was generally known before it acquired that of St. Bernard.

The first foundation of the hospice has been attributed by some to Louis le Débonnaire, by others to Charlemagne, whose uncle Bernard, an illegitimate son of Charles Martel, led a division of the invading army of Charlemagne over the Great St. Bernard, when he went to attack Lombardy. The present name of the pass, Saussure supposes, might have been derived from this Bernard; but there was another of the name, an illegitimate son of Pepin, to whom Charlemagne left the kingdom of Italy. To him may rather be attributed, if not the original establishment, the patronage of the hospice, from the interest which he would have in preserving the communication with Gaul by this passage of the Alps, and with it have given his name. There is historical evidence that a monastery existed on the Great St. Bernard at least as early as 760, which is fifty years before the time of Louis le Débonnaire. Vultgaire was then abbot, and, it is said, was elected thirty-four years after the foundation, which would carry this event back to 726. Simler mentions that, in 851, Hartmann,

at that time abbé and almoner of Mont Joux, was made Bishop of Lausanne. The annals of Bertin state, that Lothaire the Second, king of Lorraine, in 859, made a treaty with his brother, the emperor, Louis the Second, by which he ceded to him Geneva, Lausanne, and Sion, but reserved particularly *l'hôpital du Saint Bernard*, which proves, says Saussure, the importance of this passage, and the name that it bore. But its history before this period is very obscure, because in the year 895 it was devastated by Arnaud, count of the Valais, whose enemy, Rodolph of Burgundy, had taken refuge at the hospice ; and in revenge for the protection thus given to him, Arnaud destroyed the monuments and records of the monastery.

The present hospice was founded in 962, by Bernard, who was born of a noble family of Savoy, at the château of Menthon, on the lake of Annecy. A determination at an early age to devote himself to an ecclesiastical life induced him to desert his home and go to Aosta, of which city he afterwards became archdeacon. A coincidence of his name with that of the monastery, probably influenced his determination to re-establish the hospice on Mont Joux, of which he became the chief. He founded or restored at nearly the same time another on the Little Saint Bernard, and gave to them the name and placed them under the protection of his favourite saint, Nicholas de Myre, as tutelary patron

of these establishments ; by degrees the name of the devotee was joined to that of the saint, and after the canonization of Bernard, his name superseded that of all others, and has continued attached to the hospice since 1123. The attempt of Constantine to destroy the worship of Jupiter did not entirely succeed ; but Saint Bernard rooted out the remains of paganism, and founded an establishment for active benevolence, to which thousands have been indebted. He died in 1008, after having governed the convent upwards of forty years.

For some time after the death of Saint Bernard, the hospice was exposed to frequent outrages, from barbarians who traversed the mountains ; and its records of the eleventh century present a succession of calamities. The Saracens overran the country, carrying fire and sword into the Alpine valleys ; the monastery of Mont Joux was burnt, and its ruins became a station of brigands, who plundered or exacted an exorbitant payment from all passengers through a barrier which they established at the south-western extremity of the lake. The Normans having determined to expel these marauders, broke down the barriers, and killed the guard. Still outrages continued ; and Canute, king of England and Denmark, who made a pilgrimage to Rome in 1031, complained to the pope, and the emperor whom he met there, of

the horrors and violence committed in the Alps upon his subjects going on pilgrimages to Rome, who seldom ventured to traverse these mountains, unless in companies of four or five hundred. His complaints were regarded, the tolls of the passage were abolished, and Canute, in consequence, wrote to his bishops and prelates, informing them, that he had secured the safety of the pilgrims in the route of the Pennine Alps. The brigands were driven out; good order succeeded to outrage, and the convent was re-established. In the contests of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa with Pope Alexander III., and Humbert, count of Maurienne, diplomas of protection were given by them to the convent, for the security of persons and property belonging to the monastery. It was one of the very few objects in which emperors, sovereign pontiffs, and other distinguished persons, disputed the glory of fostering and protecting a foundation so important to humanity. Under such guardians the convent soon acquired great celebrity and opulence. As early as 1177, it had, in various dioceses, eighty-eight benefices, in priories, cures, châteaux, and farms; it had lands in Sicily, in Flanders, and in England. Its climax of riches and importance was in 1480, when it possessed ninety-eight cures alone. Subsequently, however, the reformation, political changes in the states, loss of distant property, disputes with

the popes, with the neighbouring states, and with each other, drove the monks of Saint Bernard to seek even eleemosynary assistance. The very land upon which their noble duties are performed has been the subject of disputes between the neighbouring states. Sardinia claimed it as within a frontier extending to the bridge of Nudri, on the northern side of the pass of the Great St. Bernard ; but the Valaisans established a claim to it as within the diocese of Sion, by bulls of the popes from Leo IX. to Benoit XIV. The hospice, therefore, stands within the canton of the Valais ; but its authority extends only to the middle of the lake, where, on the borders, the column marks the line of demarcation ; and the excellent brethren of Saint Bernard had not only all their property within the state of Sardinia taken from them, but they are actually taxed by this state for the use which they make of the summer pasturage of the vacherie. Very little property in land now belongs to the monks : they have a vineyard at Clarens, which, in the twenty-second note of the third canto of *Childe Harold*, is, to the disgrace of Lord Byron, made the subject of a sneer at the establishment on the Saint Bernard, for having, he says, cut down the “Bosquet de Julie”—“with brutal selfishness, that the ground might be enclosed into a vineyard for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition :” he would thus, for the sake of Rousseau,

set the worthlessness of such a “Bosquet” against the utility and value of a vineyard, a sort of property the most valuable near the lake of Geneva, which was to be employed so entirely in the service of humanity. This vineyard, and a farm at Roche, in the Pays de Vaud, are now their only possessions : from these their resources are small, and in aid of them collections are regularly made in the Swiss cantons ; but this has been sometimes abused by impostors who have collected as the agents of the hospice.



## CHAPTER X.

Departure of Visitors—Descent from the Hospice—Plain of Prou—Forest of St. Pierre—Passage of Napoleon's Army in 1800—Bourg St. Pierre—Liddes—Some English Travellers—St. Branchier—Inundation of the Valley of Bagnes in 1818—Details of the proceedings of the Engineers, and their unparalleled bravery—Valley of the Drance—Martigny.

ALL the visitors had left the hospice before us. The party with the children, who had arrived after dark, started before daylight, enjoying the pleasure of being able to assure their friends that they had *visited* the hospice of the Great St. Bernard; they returned to the Valais the same way that they came. The honeymoon party had taken the same course, and we were now ready to follow them. The mules, which we had hired to go on with us to Liddes, had returned last night to St. Remy and been brought up again this morning: this is the custom when the season will allow it, unless they bring hay or corn with them, as it is necessary to preserve all the forage that they can save for winter store. Our Scotch friend had not been provident enough, or aware of this; but with a promise of a share of our mules, he joined

us in our journey to Martigny. We parted with regret from the excellent brethren at the hospice, and moving towards the enormous mass of Mont Velan, which, with its pinnacled rocks and streaming glaciers, appeared to close in our route in that direction, we began to descend, and soon lost sight of the building in the narrow way and steep declivity. After crossing two or three broad patches of snow and the bridge of Nudri, and passing, at the base of Mont Velan, through the scenes where avalanches are so frequent in the spring and winter, we arrived in an hour at two châteaux called l'Hôpital, a spot regularly visited in the dangerous season by the brethren of the convent, their servants, or their dogs, to search for travellers who need their assistance, and to leave some refreshments at one of the châteaux.

This descent from the hospice leads into the plain of Prou. A pasturage surrounded by the *belles horreurs* of the Alps, the glacier of Menoue, which descends from Mont Velan, and the savage, sterile, and lofty character of the objects which enclose the plain, well deserves this favourite epithet of the French. Stunted trees now began to appear, but at a greater depth from the summit than on the Italian side of the mountain. A stream, one of the sources of the Drance, descends through the plain from the glacier of Menoue, and enters a deep defile below the forest of Saint

Pierre. The road soon winds along the side of a ravine, amidst rocks and the trunks and roots of enormous larches and pines, which wildly overhang the deep precipices above the foaming torrent; these render the route impassable in a char. Here it was that Napoleon met with the greatest difficulty in transporting his cannon and *matériel*, in crossing the Great St. Bernard in May 1800. Under the direction of Marmont, who commanded the artillery, and Gassendi, the inspector of the ordinance, the cannon were dismounted and placed in the trunks of trees hollowed to receive them, and thus dragged up the steep and dangerous ascents by half a battalion, whilst the other half carried their own and their comrades' arms and accoutrements, with provision for five days. The gun-carriages and ammunition-wagons were taken to pieces, placed on mules, and thus conveyed across the mountain. The soldiers were often obliged to walk in single file; and when the head of a column rested, it checked those behind. Availing themselves of the halt, the soldiers refreshed themselves with biscuits steeped in melted snow, and then, again advancing, beguiled their labour and renewed their exertions under the inspiration of national songs. Napoleon himself had a narrow escape here. In a dangerous part of the road, near the upper termination of the forest of St. Pierre, he slipped from his mule on the snow; but he was

saved from falling over a precipice by his guide, who caught him by the coat. The guide, who was a peasant, received a gift from Napoleon for this service of a thousand francs. How much of the eventful history of that period turned upon this little adventure!

From the forest of Saint Pierre the scene looking towards the hospice was one of extraordinary grandeur. The road winding through the steep intricacies of rocks and the roots of old pines, overhangs on the right the deep ravine in which the Drance flows; and beyond the forest the path could still be traced to the plain of Prou, bounded by lofty mountains, glaciers, and the enormous mass of the Mont Velan.

From the forest, the rugged path leads down to the village of Saint Pierre, which is entered by an old gate, connected with a wooden bridge thrown across a very deep and narrow ravine, through which the Drance rushes at a frightful depth. It reminded us of the scene at the Pont Serrant on the Little St. Bernard. Bourg Saint Pierre is a village of great antiquity; in proof of which, numerous relics and inscriptions are found and preserved there. Among these is the military column dedicated to the younger Constantine, which, De Rivaz says, formerly replaced the statue of Jupiter that was on the summit of the Great St. Bernard, but which was destroyed by Con-

stantine about the year 339. There is a fine cascade near St. Pierre. From this village we proceeded to Liddes, over a road scarcely good enough for a *char-à-banc*, though these carriages are sometimes brought as high up as St. Pierre from Martigny. At Liddes we rested our mules, and agreed to pay ten francs more for their use to Martigny.

Here we found at the inn the parties who had left the hospice in the morning. The honeymooners had possession of a long table in the eating-room, whilst we were seated at a small round marble slab. Soon after our arrival, the party with the children came in from a walk, and joined those at the long table, who we thought did not appear particularly delighted by the renewal of an acquaintance began last night at the hospice. The children were so oddly dressed, that the difference of sex was not very obvious; the boy's long frock-coat and the girl's trousers left it very questionable, until mamma, holding out the plate of the child near her, addressed the young married lady with, "Miss, I'll thankee to an my Selina a bit of that 'ere." If my friend had not borne testimony to the truth of this *mem*, written verbatim at the moment, I should be open to suspicion of having exaggerated it, and the disbelief that such vulgarity could have reached the Great St. Bernard. I only record it as a subject

for astonishment, how such persons ever thought of such a journey. In my sketch yesterday of the variety of visitors to the hospice, I omitted this ; but, in fact, I had no idea that the gentilities of Wapping had ever extended so far from the Thames.

From Liddes we descended through some beautiful close scenes, in the Val d'Entremont, luxuriant in vegetation. After passing through the village of Orsières, whence a valley leads, by the Col de Ferret, to Courmayeur, we proceeded down to the little town of St. Branchier, situated at the entrance of the Valley of Bagnes, and near the confluence of the streams which descend from the two principal sources of the Drance, the glaciers of Mont Velan and those of Charmotane. The latter are of vast extent to the eastward of Mont Velan, and the route to them lies up through the Valley of Bagnes: they are very difficult of access, though for a few days in the height of summer the peasants sometimes cross over them into the Val Pellina, in Piemont. It was by this dangerous pass that Calvin escaped from the persecutions of others in the Val d'Aosta, to practise his own at Geneva.

Around St. Branchier we saw the fearful effects of the great inundation of the Valley of Bagnes in 1818. The height which the torrent attained is seen in the desolation it has left; vast blocks of

stone, which were driven and deposited there by the force of the waters, now strew the valley ; and sand and pebbles present an arid surface, where rich pasturages were seen before the catastrophe. The quantity and violence of the water suddenly disengaged, and the velocity of its descent, presented a force which the mind may calculate, but cannot conceive.

In the accounts which have been given of this event, the object of the writers has been merely to describe the catastrophe, and the extent of its injuries ; but in reading the account of M. Escher de Lenth, published in the *Bib. Univ. de Genève, Sci. et Arts*, tom. viii. p. 291, I was most forcibly struck with the unparalleled heroism of the brave men who endeavoured to avert the evil, by opening a channel for the waters, which had, by their accumulation, become a source of terror to the inhabitants of these valleys.

In the spring of 1818, the people of the Valley of Bagnes became alarmed on observing the low state of the waters of the Drance, at a season when the melting of the snows usually enlarged the torrent ; and this alarm was increased by the records of similar appearances before the dreadful inundation of 1595, which was then occasioned by the accumulation of the waters behind the débris of a glacier that formed a dam, which remained until the pressure of the water burst the dike, and it

rushed through the valley, leaving desolation in its course.

In April 1818, some persons went up the valley to ascertain the cause of the deficiency of water, and they discovered that vast masses of the glaciers of Getroz, and avalanches of snow, had fallen into a narrow part of the valley, between Mont Pleureur and Mont Mauvoisin, and formed a dike of ice and snow 600 feet wide and 400 feet high, on a base of 3000 feet, behind which the waters of the Drance had accumulated, and formed a lake above 7000 feet long. M. Venetz, the engineer of the Valais, was consulted, and he immediately decided upon cutting a gallery through this barrier of ice, 60 feet above the level of the water at the time of commencing, and where the dike was 600 feet thick. He calculated upon making a tunnel through this mass before the water should have risen 60 feet higher in the lake. On the 10th of May, the work was begun by gangs of fifty men, who relieved each other, and worked, without intermission, day and night, with inconceivable courage and perseverance, neither deterred by the daily occurring danger from the falling of fresh masses of the glacier, nor by the rapid increase of the water in the lake, which rose sixty-two feet in thirty-four days—on an average, nearly two feet each day; but it once rose five feet in one day, and threatened each moment to burst



the dike by its increasing pressure ; or, rising in a more rapid proportion than the men could proceed with their work, render their efforts abortive, by rising above them. Sometimes dreadful noises were heard, as the pressure of the water detached masses of ice from the bottom, which floating, presented so much of their bulk above the water, as led to the belief that some of them were seventy feet thick. The men persevered in their fearful duty without any serious accident ; and though suffering severely from cold and wet, and surrounded by dangers which cannot be justly described, by the 4th of June they had accomplished an opening 600 feet long ; but having begun their work on both sides of the dike at the same time, the place where they ought to have met was twenty feet lower on the side of the lake than on the other : it was fortunate that latterly the increase of perpendicular height of the water was less, owing to the extension of its surface. They proceeded to level the highest side of the tunnel, and completed it just before the water reached them. On the evening of the 13th the water began to flow. At first, the opening was not large enough to carry off the supplies of water which the lake received, and it rose two feet above the tunnel ; but this soon enlarged from the action of the water, as it melted the floor of the gallery, and the torrent rushed through. In thirty-two

hours the lake sunk ten feet, and during the following twenty-four hours twenty feet more: in a few days it would have been emptied; for the floor melting, and being driven off as the water escaped, kept itself below the level of the water within; but the cataract which issued from the gallery melted, and broke up also a large portion of the base of the dike, which had served as its buttress; its resistance decreased faster than the pressure of the lake lessened, and at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th of June the dike burst, and in half an hour the water escaped through the breach, and left the lake empty.

The greatest accumulation of water had been 800,000,000 of cubic feet; the tunnel, before the disruption, had carried off nearly 330,000,000 — Escher says, 270,000,000; but he neglected to add 60,000,000 which flowed into the lake in three days. In half an hour, 530,000,000 cubit feet of water passed through the breach, or 300,000 feet per second; which is five times greater in quantity than the waters of the Rhine at Basle, where it is 1300 English feet wide. In one hour and a half the water reached Martigny, a distance of eight leagues. Through the first 70,000 feet it passed with the velocity of thirty-three feet per second — four or five times faster than the most rapid river known; yet it was charged with ice, rocks, earth, trees, houses, cattle, and men:

thirty-four persons were lost, four hundred cottages swept away, and the damage done in the two hours of its desolating power exceeded a million of Swiss livres. All the people of the valley had been cautioned against the danger of a sudden irruption ; yet it was fatal to so many. All the bridges in its course were swept away, and among them the bridge of Mauvoisin, which was elevated ninety feet above the ordinary height of the Drance. If the dike had remained untouched, and it could have endured the pressure until the lake had reached the level of its top, a volume of 1,700,000,000 cubic feet of water would have been accumulated there, and a devastation much more fatal and extensive must have been the consequence. From this greater danger the people of the valley of the Drance were preserved by the heroism and devotion of the brave men who effected the formation of the gallery in the dike, under the direction of M. Venetz. I know no instance on record of courage equal to this : their risk of life was not for fame or for riches—they had not the usual excitements to personal risk, in a world's applause or gazetted promotion,—their devoted courage was to save the lives and property of their fellow-men, not to destroy them. They steadily and heroically persevered in their labours, amidst dangers such as a field of battle never presented, and from which some of the bravest brutes that ever lived would

have shrunk in dismay. These truly brave Valaisans deserve all honour!

Below St. Branchier, in the narrow valley of the Drance, each step exhibits evidence of the inundation. The deep glen by which the road passes, level with the river, is in one place picturesque, where a rock on the bank is pierced, and the road carried through it. At the dirty village of Bouvernier, the appearance of goîtres again distressed us; thence we proceeded high above the torrent until a rather abrupt turn in the road opened to us a view of Martigny, and the old tower of La Bâtie, near to where the Drance falls into the Rhone. We passed through the town of Martigny, and in about half an hour after, reached the inn at the village of La Bâtie, on the high route of the Simplon. It was dark before we arrived. On our way through the village, we were delighted with the singing of some peasants, who were seated at their doors in the clear beautiful evening, and sung in harmony some sweet airs. Whilst supper was arranging, I asked for the travellers' book: it was new, and a few names only had been written in it; I then inquired for the old book, in which I wrote three years since; the girl told me that it had recently been stolen by an Englishman!

## CHAPTER XI.

Pisse-Vache — St. Maurice — Martyrs — Fanatics — Lake of Geneva — St. Gingulph — Sunday Amusements — Beautiful Lake Scene — Rocks of Meillerie — Convent of Rapaille — Frontier of Savoy and Geneva — Geneva — Journey to Paris — Frontier of France — Paris — Public Entry of Charles X. — Home.

*September 19th.* — This morning my friend and I arranged for our separation, to meet again at Geneva. He was desirous of passing by Lausanne, and I by St. Gingulph and Thonon, as I had already visited the western side of the lake. He hired a *char-à-banc*, and started. Our Scotch friend joined me in another char, to proceed on the eastern side of the lake of Geneva. We set out at mid-day, and soon after leaving La Bâtie reached the famous cataract of the Pisse-Vache : we were not too late to enjoy the beautiful iris, which the sun, when the sky is clear, always points on the mists of the cataract until the mountains intercept his rays. The fall is a magnificent object; the quantity of its water, and the height from which it descends, leaves it inferior to none in Switzerland; and no other can be more favour-

ably viewed. Its volume, and the force of its descent, have thrown up around the basin which they have excavated a high ridge of débris, upon which the observer can view it so nearly, as to be within the mist that arises from the gulf into which the waters fall. When seen so closely, the effect is awful; the immense torrent appears to be poured out of the sky, and the roar of the waters utterly prevent any other sound being heard. We observed a butterfly fluttering upwards through the mist, and it passed out of our sight in safety, though it was as dangerous a sport to the poor insect as fluttering round a candle. The Pisse-Vache is a picturesque object when included in the views up or down the valley, particularly from Mieville (a village composed of a few houses near the waterfall), which pours out its population upon all visitors, and supplies a crowd of embryo mineralogists, and some less scientific beggars, that regularly assail every traveller who leaves his carriage to visit the Pisse-Vache.

A short ride brought us, through a sterile part of the valley; to the town of St. Maurice, situated at the entrance of the canton of the Valais. This place, which is one of great antiquity, is built beneath the high rocks, which almost close at this spot, and leave only a deep gorge, through which the Rhone forces its way with violence beneath a single arch, that spans the river from rock

to rock, high above the torrent. This bridge, which connects the Canton of the Valais with the Canton de Vaud, and an old castle, now in ruins, near St. Maurice, are attributed to Julius Cæsar ; but a great name is sought with as much eagerness by an antiquary to give importance to a ruin, as the name of an old master is sought by pretenders in *virtù* to recommend a picture. Proofs, however, are extant that the bridge and castle were built by one of the bishops of Sion, to defend the temporal power which had been assumed by them in the Valais. There is better evidence than the name of the Roman *Pontifex* for the early historical importance of St. Maurice. It was known, under the name of Agaunum, as a Roman station, and numerous inscriptions mark its antiquity. The name of St. Maurice was derived from its abbey, founded in the sixth century by Sigismond, king of the Burgundians, in honour of St. Maurice, who is reported, in the legends of the church, to have suffered martyrdom here, with *all* the Theban legion which he commanded, amounting to 6,000 (!) men, in the year 392—a story not believed out of the pale of the Catholic church. Near St. Maurice are many retreats, or hermitages, cut out of the face of rocks apparently inaccessible ; and here Theban anchorites formerly dwelt in holy idleness, apart from the world.

Mr. C., my presbyterian companion, was horri-

fied by an account, which we heard hawked about in the streets of St. Maurice, of a society of fanatics in one of the Protestant cantons whose creed sanctioned murder by crucifixion, and to which a whole family had become willing victims. A picture of this religious *felo de se* was exhibited, to increase the effect of the *lie*, which was thus allowed to be told to keep up the Catholic prejudices of those who dared not doubt the truth of this "invention of the enemy." The follower of John Knox was very indignant; but as his vehemence was delivered in an unknown tongue, the object of its violence was only guessed at. He had previously told me, that when his ire was roused by the lies of Catholic priests, or the knavery of Catholic guides and innkeepers—though he had a horror of profane oaths—he thought it was necessary to appear to be in a great rage; "therefore," he said, "when I am provoked by the loons in this country, I give it 'em in good braid Scotch, and they think that I am swearing."

On leaving St. Maurice, we proceeded along the Savoy side of the lake. The alluvial deposit of the Rhone forms, at the head of the lake, very extensive swamps and marshes, which in some places yields rich pasturage. It was Sunday afternoon, and my companion was much scandalised, as we passed through the villages, particularly at Vionne,



upon seeing the peasants enjoy themselves at various games, some with bowls and quoits, others in firing at a target : but he had soon more reasonable ground for displeasure, and our feelings of propriety were more outraged, when we arrived at St. Gingulph, where we proposed resting for the night. The inn lay on the left, a little out of the road ; but from a window we overlooked the route, the lake, and the beautiful scenery beyond it. Whilst our late dinner was getting ready, we saw a concourse of people in the road enjoying the fine evening, as they are generally observed to do on a Sunday in Catholic countries, but there was evidently some unusual cause of excitement ; peals of laughter reached our ears, and there appeared to be some exhibition, as we could distinguish pictures hung out in front of a booth. The struggle was amusing between my companion's curiosity and love of fun, and his being offended at this breach of the quiet and sanctity of the Sabbath ; his impatience, however, at last made him say, " I mustna sanction by my presence this disorder ; but I wish you would go and learn the cause of the uproar." I went down, and found a number of pictures, all scriptural subjects, exhibited outside the booth ; within, however, was a Punch, the most vulgar of his tribe, in all his glory, exciting the boisterous laughter of a crowded and merry audience. Why the subjects were scriptural, or the performance so unlike the

promise, I could not learn. Mr. C. lost all patience upon receiving my report, and indulged me with another specimen of his "good braid Scotch," in which I too thought he was swearing.

The evening was beautiful, and the scene over the lake at sunset enchanting. We were nearly opposite to Chillon, Clarens, and Vevay; and the romance of the scene was increased by its association with the names of Byron and Jean Jacques Rousseau: the name of the former was written on the wall of our room, and, the waiter said, by his lordship; but of this I do not believe a word—wall-chalking was not one of his propensities, and this use of his name is now a stale trick.

20th.—The look-out upon the lake, in the delicious freshness and sunrise of the morning, was as beautiful as the sunset of last evening; but the new coat of whitewash lately given to the castle of Chillon was sadly out of harmony.

At St. Gingulph, a torrent divides Savoy from the canton of the Valais, and we entered the territories of the King of Sardinia. We soon arrived at the rocks of Meillerie, on which a greater charm has been wrought by the realities of Napoleon than by the imaginings of Rousseau. There is not, nor does there ever appear to have been, any thing strikingly picturesque about the spot; and it owes its interest to the tale of Julia and Saint Preux,

though more deserving of it from the admirable construction of the new road, which is here carried on a terrace, cut out of the face of the rock, thirty feet above the water of the lake. At a short distance from these rocks the greatest depth of the lake to which their bases sink, is found to be, almost perpendicularly, 1000 feet. There are some pleasing scenes along this part of the lake; and on the opposite side, Vevay, Lausanne, and numerous villages, sparkle along the shore.

After passing through Evain, a little town nearly opposite to Lausanne, where the lake is about twelve miles across, its greatest width, we left the borders of the lake, and passed a tongue of land to Thonon, a large town, the capital of the Chablais. About half-way across the promontory we traversed the Drance, a river which descends from the north-western side of the Buet, and before arriving at Thonon passed on our right the convent of Rapaille, an abbey built by Amadeus, the eighth duke of Savoy, where he established a fraternity of Augustine monks, and, retiring from the government of Savoy in 1434, became their chief. During the disgraceful contests for the chair of St. Peter in the fifteenth century, when three popes governed at once, Amadeus was elected one of these, by the re-united council of Bâle, in opposition to Eugene IV. He assumed the keys of St. Peter as Felix V. and kept his court at

Bâle, Geneva, and Lausanne. He issued bulls during his power, and created twenty-three cardinals, besides giving other proofs of his authority. Finding, however, the government of the church even more difficult than the government of Savoy, he publicly resigned the popedom in the cathedral of Lausanne, and, retiring to his bishopric of Geneva, died there in the year 1451.

From Thonon we again skirted the lake to the village of Coudre, thence crossing another promontory which terminates in the lake at Yvoire, we entered Dovain, the first post-town from Geneva : between this town and the village of Corsi, we passed the frontiers of Savoy and the canton of Geneva. It has been often remarked, that the common frontier of a Catholic and Protestant country display, near the line of demarcation, the influence of the two religions on the moral characters of the people : it is strikingly observed on this frontier. On the Savoy side it was the garden of the sluggard—on the Genevese, of the industrious ; and the appearance of the comfort and independence of the latter people was as obvious as the superior cultivation of their soil. I would not pander to prejudice ; but it is a greater prejudice to shut one's eyes to the fact.

The scenery around Geneva is enlivened by the *campagnas* of those who sojourn on the shores of the lake in this delightful neighbourhood. On

approaching the city by this road towards the right, across the water, the plains of Geneva were seen bounded by the long chain of the Jura, and on our left the Mont Salève, and the valley of the Arve, served as bases to the grand forms of the Mole, the Buet, and Mont Blanc. The city of Geneva is more beautiful from this approach than from any other. The fine road on which we proceeded was the foreground to the lake—the lake to the city; and this was surrounded by its apparently vast garden, studded with villas, and the whole bounded by lofty mountains. We entered Geneva by the Porte de Rive, and I soon found myself in my old quarters at the Ecu de Genève.

21st.—My friend did not arrive from Lausanne yesterday. I have received letters which make me anxious to return to England; but as we had divided our last five Napoleons, except a bill on Herries and Co., which he proposed cashing at Lausanne, and dividing with me when we met again at Geneva, I was almost pennyless. On inquiry, I learnt that only one place remained in the Paris diligence for to-morrow morning, and that another could not be had for three days. I had the good fortune to meet a friend who offered me his purse. I have secured that place, and I shall start to-morrow morning at four o'clock.

26th.—I reached Paris last evening, after a long journey of four days and three nights. The second night was very fatiguing; this passed off, however, and before I reached Paris I felt no more tired than on the first six hours of my journey. We breakfasted on the first day at St. Cergue, on the Jura, whence the view of the lake of Geneva and Mont Blanc is very magnificent. At La Rousses we arrived on the French frontier, and our baggage and persons underwent a severe search. Near the custom-house there is a fine view of the little lake of Rousses, the highest source of the waters of the Lac de Joux and the lake of Neufchatel, the course of the valley being from this elevation on the Jura to the latter lake.

From La Rousses we rapidly descended to the little town of Morey, where our passports were again demanded. Ascending from Morey, we continued travelling through the night in the mountainous districts of the Jura. We supped at St. Laurent; and at the next post, Maison-Neuve, we were turned out at midnight to submit again to an examination of baggage and person at a station of douaniers; thence we passed through Campagnole, and at daylight looked out from the hills above Poligny on the boundless plains of France. We reached Dole about twelve o'clock, where we had to wait for the diligence from

Besançon, which takes the passengers by the Geneva diligence from Dole to Paris. We started again about two o'clock, and reached Dijon at eight in the evening of the 23d. From Dijon I had a pleasant travelling companion in a medical student going to Paris: he was a bit of a philosopher, but his knowledge of books was no match for our conducteur's knowledge of the world; he had served twelve years as a soldier of Napoleon, and, moreover, sung delightfully; and whenever he failed in an argument, he finished in a song. If his spirits were not exhaustless, they at least lasted to Paris, and enabled me to pass through this uninteresting part of France without ennui.

27th.—Charles Dix has made his *entrée* as king into Paris to-day, and I joined the world in a peep at the cortège: the weather was wretched, and mine made one of ten thousand umbrellas which were paraded by the expectants in the Boulevards. I waited for royalty until I was thoroughly tired. Not a book or print-stall was open to calm one's impatience, and two hours passed away after my arrival in the Boulevards Italiens, before the discharge of one hundred pieces of artillery announced that his majesty had mounted his horse. Tired with standing, and thinking it unwise to remain ankle-deep in mud any longer, I got a place on a sort of temporary stage, for which they had

asked three francs, but as the price fell with the rain, I was a welcome customer at one. The discharge of the cannon put *tout le monde* on the *qui vive*; but it was still nearly an hour before a line of trumpeters appeared, followed by regiments of lancers, cuirassiers, and body-guards, twelve deep. The Dukes of Bourbon, Orleans, and Angoulême, followed, with their establishments and staffs, then the King, with the marshals and great officers of state. The spectacle, in its way, was certainly very imposing. All were on horseback except the Duchesses of Angoulême, Berri, and Orleans, who followed in mourning coaches, each drawn by eight horses. Then followed the charbonniers, millers, and other tagrag and bobtail, privileged to form part of the show; and the national guards brought up the rear of a procession which was one hour in passing me. I regretted the unfavourable weather; but it was consolatory to see the justice of Heaven, in equally drenching the king and the coal-heavers. It might have been a lesson of humility to the loftiest, and of submission to its decrees, to all. The procession moved on to the cathedral of Notre Dame. I did not wait for its return; my impatience to get to England occupied my heart, and the eyes had no chance with such a competitor to detain me during a repetition of the mummary. I shall return



by the first conveyance, delighted with my trip, and leaving for future opportunity the examination of such other routes in the Alps as I am desirous of exploring for the objects which led to this excursion.

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INCLUDING THE

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THE MONT MORO, THE SPLUGEN, THE ST. BERNARDIN,  
THE ST. GOTHARD, THE BRUNIG, THE GRIMSEL,  
THE GRIES, AND THE SIMPLON.



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### CHAPTER XII.

Departure — Boulogne — Paris — Forest of Fontainebleau —  
Montargis — Gens-d'arme — Valley of the Loire — Nivers  
— Valley of the Allier — Roanne — Mont Tarare — Lyons  
— Departure for Chamberry — Voiturier — Pont Beauvoisin  
— Defile of La Caille — Les Eschelles — New Gallery —  
Old Roads — Chamberry.

LEFT home alone on Friday evening, July 29th, 1825, and on the 30th reached Boulogne, by the *Britannia* steamer. One of her engines became deranged on the voyage, and delayed us an hour; yet, though we could only proceed with the power of one engine, we arrived after a passage of four hours and a half.

Boulogne was crowded with the waste and the worst of English society. I never, within two hours, heard and saw so much of the Ramsbottom family and its vulgarities. The Hôtel des Londres was full of visitors; I sheltered in the Hôtel du Nord: even the name had some temptation in it with the thermometer at 90°.

Late at night the *Hero* steamer arrived from London with a Cockney cargo of 357 bold adventurers; they bade defiance to douaniers, and stormed several hotels; but as there were many more bodies arrived than beds to receive them, several crept into diligences, or bivouacked in the street.

31st. — Started for Paris by Abbeville and Beauvais. At the Hôtel du Lion Noir, at the former place, we had, as usual at this house, a villanous dinner, at an exorbitant charge. Whilst we breakfasted at Beaumont-sur-Oise, a thief stole my casquette from the diligence. Arrived in Paris at four P.M. on the 1st of August.

Arrangements for my journey and delays of office detained me there five days. For two or three, Paris, to those best acquainted with it, is always endurable. Changes occur from year to year; and those who remember it at longer intervals can see some that are important enough to induce reflection. I especially noticed the improvement in the dress and manners of the men,

which was so slow in rising from the period of *sans-cullotism* to that of the Restoration, that a respectable Frenchman was scarcely distinguished from the canaille, in dress, when the Bourbons returned. Now, thanks, of course, to the influence of woman, they bear about them the characteristics of smartness and comfort. Again, trifling as the illustration may seem, I observed, as one proof of the passing away of the military mania of the French, that there was less seen of the Little Hero *Goût*. Children are not so often met with, as formerly, fantastically dressed as soldiers—led about through the dirty streets of Paris, and exhibited half asleep and draggletailed, pitied by all but the dreaming and delighted parents, in whose eyes they seemed to be future Napoleons.

*August 6th.*—Left Paris at six in the morning by that diligence to Lyons which passes through the Bourbonnais. We reached Montargis at six in the evening, after a dull day's journey, except in the ride through the forest of Fontainebleau, where a gloom and primitive wildness prevail which the traveller scarcely expects to encounter. The trees are of large size, and there is a savage and broken surface of ground seen through occasional openings from the main road, where vast rocks are fantastically piled and huge stones are strewn about. Those parts of the forest seem to

have been thus left from the period of a great convulsion. In other parts, the smooth glades present, beneath the shade of the forest, carpeted avenues where fairies might revel. That portion of the forest which lies beyond Fontainebleau is the wildest; and as the ground at this extremity is high above Nemours, the vast plains observed from it, stretching away towards the unseen Loire, present a boundless expanse to the eye.

At Montargis we saw the ruins of the once celebrated château where the old court of France was often held, and where the queens of France, induced by the pretended purity of the air, or the real fashion of the custom, came to their *accouchemens*; and so numerous were the royal births there, that the château acquired the name of *Le Berceau des Enfans de France*.

Night robbed us of the first scene of the valley of the Loire, as it is usually observed from the hill before descending upon Briare, and which, under favourable circumstances, displays one of the most beautiful views on this route.

The next morning, at ten, breakfasted at La Charité. On the road there a dispute had taken place between the conducteur of our diligence and the people of the last post-house at Pouilly: a man was sent after him to claim twenty-four francs, omitted to be paid to the master; but it appeared that the conducteur's accounts were

clear, and the error or roguery the postmaster's. Two gens-d'armes passed on the road with a prisoner, chained round the neck, and held by one of them. These men in authority were referred to by the complainant, and we were detained until they heard the evidence on both sides, when they decided in favour of the conducteur.

The valley of the Loire, through which our route lay, is very beautiful, rich in all the productions of soil, well inhabited, and full of life and bustle, from the advantages which the navigation of the Loire afforded. Numerous and often beautifully situated towns enrich the scenery: one of the most striking of these is Sancerre, seated on the left bank of the river, on a hill whose slopes are covered with vineyards, from which the most esteemed wine in the department is obtained. We passed through Nivers, the capital of the Nivernois, an ancient division of France, famous for its manufactures of iron, glass, and coarse drapery, and as notorious for its bad inns. At Nivers the road leaves the valley of the Loire, and ascends that of the Allier. About ten at night we reached Moulins, rendered interesting to Englishmen by Sterne's tale of "Maria." The second night, usually the most fatiguing of a long journey, carried us through a country generally uninteresting, until we reached the Loire again at Roanne the third day about ten A.M.



Soon after leaving Roanne, we began our ascent towards the Mont Tarare, where the scenery is very grand and of great extent: it rises 3000 feet above the level of the sea. A road of admirable construction, one of the benefits of Napoleon, was carried over the Mont Tarare by Céard, the engineer of the route of the Simplon. In passing the Tarare I was struck by the appearance of industry and comfort which every where presented itself: the high hills were cultivated to their summits, and every child was employed in spinning or working upon a tambour-frame. An old French gentleman, a fellow-traveller in the diligence, spoke of the independence and property of the farmers of the mountain; nearly every one of them, he said, was living upon his own little estate. The fine road by which we descended to Tarare made the old gentleman eloquent upon Napoleon; and I was struck with an observation of his upon one of the causes of the decline of the emperor's power. His marshals and generals, he said, were possessed of riches and raised to rank which could not be increased by further service; they grew cautious as they grew older and as military ardour subsided: they deserted him to secure what they had gained.

Tarare is a place of extensive manufactures in silk and flax. Some English capitalists have established themselves here, of whom the natives

are very jealous: we met some of their English workmen on the Mont Tarare, returning by another diligence to England. I was ashamed of their boisterous conduct and violent swearing, by which they evidently thought they were distinguishing themselves: so they were—as blackguards. It was midnight before we reached the bureau at Lyons.

10th.—Met yesterday, at the table d'hôte, a young Scotchman going to Genoa by Turin. We agreed to travel together, and bargained with a voiturier to take us to Turin in six days for sixty-nine francs each, including our lodgings at the resting places. This morning we started at five o'clock. On leaving the suburbs we were surprised at our voiturier's coolly opening the door to let in two Savoyards, whom he had agreed to take to Turin, though his bargain with us was for our sole occupation of his carriage: this we protested against, and ordered him to return to the inn, or leave his new customers on the road; but the rascal made coaxing appeals to our generosity, said it would be of service to the respectable young men and himself, and it should be no inconvenience or cause of delay to us, if we would allow them to enter the voiture: it was too early to refer to a magistrate, and to return would be to lose a day—we threatened to mulct him of half the sum agreed upon, they were

admitted, and we proceeded. Slept at Tour du Pin.

11th. — Started at four; arrived, at eight o'clock, at Pont Beauvoisin, a little town on the *Guiers Vif*, a river forming part of the frontier boundary of France and Savoy: here the custom-houses are stationed. The douaniers were civil, and gave us no trouble; but we were detained an hour for the examination of our passports, as both the French and Sardinian authorities were asleep when we arrived.

After leaving Pont Beauvoisin, our route lay through a rich and beautiful country, but apparently bounded by a mountain before us; a road, however, led up its side to the abrupt defile of La Caille, a ravine cut through by the *Guiers*, which foamed and forced its way far below the terrace by which the road is carried through this narrow gorge. This is the spot where J. J. Rousseau, in that record of his follies the "Confessions," says, "On his way to visit Madame de Warrens, at Les Charmettes, near Chamberry, he enjoyed the pleasure of rolling stones from the road into the roaring torrent below, and observed them bound from ledge to ledge, before they reached their goal in the depth and distance." We failed not to seek amusement in the same way. On looking back from the entrance to the defile towards France, we enjoyed a scene of exceeding

beauty. The road through the defile is wild and fine all the way to the village of Les Eschelles, where we arrived about twelve o'clock.

After we had breakfasted, we walked on, as we thought, towards the grand gallery; but having crossed a bridge, and proceeded a little way towards where two roads branched off, we found both so villanously bad, that we suspected we had made some mistake: to our vexation, we learnt, upon inquiry, that we were again within the frontiers of France; and on retracing our way to the bridge, we saw the douaniers searching those who passed, and expected the same treatment; instead of which, they laughed at our error, and one of them walked with us a little way, to put us in the road to Chamberry; and when he saw us preparing to reward him, he left us to avoid it. We walked on before our voiture, to examine the new gallery and road formed by order of Napoleon; the old road crossed the valley,—the present winds round it, gradually ascending. The eye could trace the course of the new line to its termination in the gallery, the entrance to which, half way up the face of the perpendicular rocks, was so mere a speck, that it appeared incredible to us that it should be the celebrated road of Les Eschelles.

On our way to the gallery, we were exposed to a violent storm, till we found shelter beneath one

of the arches of the new bridges, or aqueducts, formed to keep the road dry. We soon reached what was pointed out to us from below as the entrance to the new gallery, which we found to be 25 feet high, and of the same width, and 307 metres, or 1000 English feet, long,—a much greater length than that of Gondo, in the Simplon, which is only 182 metres. After walking through, we met an old soldier, a Cantonier, who lives in a hovel on the Savoy side of the gallery. Leaving directions to stop the voiture until our return, he accompanied us to the two old roads. On the most ancient, some Roman pavement still remains: he pointed out the entrance to the old passage, which gave rise to the name Les Eschelles, retained by the village below. The road passed through a deep cavern, by which travellers had to descend on ladders more than eighty feet; and on appearing again in open day on the face of the rocks, had double that depth still to descend by ladders to get to the valley below. This passage was always dangerous to the unskilful, and often rendered impassable by the snow and torrents which rushed through the cavern: it is now blocked up, and has not been employed since 1670, when Charles Emmanuel, second duke of Savoy, as we are informed by a monument upon the road which he made, “forced open the rocks, levelled the mountains, caused their menacing heights to roll at his

feet, and, superior to the Romans, who, though superior to so many others, had never attempted this great work, had conquered Nature herself by the opening of this triumphal way, which assured *for ever* to his people on the opposite sides of this gorge the means of communication between them." The work was certainly one of extraordinary difficulty, and much was accomplished even in forming, in such a situation, a narrow, steep, and difficult road. It remained, however, for the engineers of Buonaparte to pierce a gallery 307 metres *through* the mountain, and leave the old road, and its bombastic record, to be visited only as a curiosity. The new road was left unfinished by Buonaparte; but, to the credit of the late King of Sardinia, it was completed and open to travellers in the year 1817.

Upon the entrance of the French army into Italy, the old road was strongly contested at its entrance, and innumerable marks are yet seen upon the rocks and the monument, which were pointed out to us by our guide, of the balls exchanged by the contending parties.

It is a curious fact, that at one time, when the monument, with its inscription, was in a worse state of dilapidation than it is at present, it was repaired by order of Buonaparte. To commemorate its restoration, the following memorial was added upon a tablet below the old inscription:—

HOC MERITUM  
OPTIMI SABAUDIÆ DUCIS MONUMENTUM  
AUSPICE BONAPARTE  
PRIMUM FRANCORUM CONSULE RESTAURATUM  
ANNO REIPUBLICÆ GALLIÆ XI. (1803.)

Not a word of this inscription can now be traced.

The opposite ends of the gallery present very different scenes: on looking towards France, the view is beautiful of the valley of Les Eschelles; towards Italy, it is a ravine, rocky and sterile, called the Valley of Couz, which continues some way, and then expands into the plain of Chamberry. The route, in many places, reminded me of the parish cross-roads in England twenty years since, its condition is so bad. Near Chamberry, however, it is undergoing great improvement, and about two miles of what promises to be straight and excellent is constructing. We arrived at the capital of Savoy early enough to visit some pleasant promenades in the Boulevards. Slept at Chamberry.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Montmelian — Aiguebelle — Valley of the Arc — St. Jean de Maurienne — Modane — Lanslebourg — Hotel Royale — A Dog and a Duel — Ascent of the Mont Cenis — Game — Descent to Suza — Plain of St. Nicholas — Short Cut — Suza — Valley of the Doire — Monastery of St. Michael — Turin — Bankers — St. Anthony's Miracles — Road to Caluso — Ivrea — Val d'Aosta — Chatillon — Baths of St. Vincent — Bear-Hunt.

*August 12th.*—Soon after leaving the capital of Savoy, we saw the Alps which divide this part of the states of Sardinia from the department of the High Alps, in France, and the scenery became more interesting, especially at Montmelian, which is finely situated on the Isère: from its old fort, the view down the vale of Gresivaudan is very beautiful. At Montmelian we drank some excellent wine, for which its vineyards are celebrated; and, crossing the Isère, continued to ascend its left bank for some time; but we soon drove through a mere lane, without scenery and without interest: filth and its attendants, goîtres and crétins, often met the eye; and the road continued dull until we arrived at the neat and prettily situated town of Aiguebelle, where we



took our *déjeûné à la fourchette*. I was struck with the prodigious size of a remise at Aiguebelle; it measured 130 feet by 80. The necessity for building it so large led us to augur favourably of the state of commerce on this route.

Continuing to ascend on the banks of the Arc to La Chambre, we met many carts laden with roasted iron ore; lead, also, is raised in the valley. The peasants were generally engaged in getting in their scanty harvest. The soil is rarely dressed, and its miserable produce as seldom cut,—it is pulled up; and I should think, with our English notions of the value of labour, not worth the time bestowed upon it, except in some of the flats of the valley, where the ground lies above the desolating effects of the winter torrents; yet every nook into which a handful of grain could be thrown had been thus appropriated. At La Chambre, it was necessary to enter the inn through the kitchen, which effectually destroyed the appetite raised by the day's journey; in our transit, however, we bore away a thousand fleas, who were, doubtless, as greatly rejoiced as ourselves at their escape. The sunset before our arrival at La Chambre presented one of those splendid scenes sometimes witnessed in the Alps, when their summits reflect all the glorious hues which the sun imparts to them before he sinks below the horizon.

13th.—Started at four, and soon arrived at St. Jean de Maurienne, the chief place in the Valley of the Arc. Here nothing remains to interest the traveller: the time has, happily, passed away when the tyranny of its *Comtes* and the violence of religious disputation were sources of misery to its inhabitants. The doctrines of Calvin once excited great troubles here; now the bears and the avalanches are the only disturbers of the tranquillity of these valleys. A fine defile conducted us to St. Michael. I mounted to the site of an old tower; the scene below, of a little basin in the Valley of the Arc, was very picturesque. After taking refreshment we again skirted the river to Modane; the road was dull, and unlike the near approaches to the Alps which I had witnessed in other passes. At Modane our voiturier insisted upon resting, instead of at Lanslebourg, which he had originally agreed to do: if he had any unworthy motive in this, we endeavoured to defeat it; Mr. M'F. and I walked on to Lanslebourg, fourteen miles, though it is stated in the French post-book to be four posts. The road from Modane commences by skirting the Mont Bramante; rising by a steep ascent to Fort Lesseillon, beneath a dense forest of pines; it was here, that, when Walpole was going to Italy, his little dog was seized by a wolf, and borne away up the mountain. The scene around is of a very wild character. The fort, which is now

repairing, is of great strength, and admirably situated for the protection of the pass ; a horrid defile, many hundreds of feet deep, through which the Arc forces its way, divides the fort from the road. It is not too wide for the construction of a bridge ; for a single arch spans the gulf, in a terrific situation, and bears, as usual in such places, the name of the Great Pontifex—Il Diavolo. A bomb-proof building is constructing on the side of the defile opposite to the fort. The situation is extremely savage, commanding, and picturesque. Thence the road descends to the village of Bramante, distant about three miles, and continues in the valley without any interest in its scenery. We were much annoyed, on arriving at Ternignon, at finding that it was not Lanslebourg : our inquiries about the distance were answered in the usual unsatisfactory way, that is, the further we walked, the further, we were told, we still had to go. We arrived, however, at Lanslebourg about nine o'clock ; and the Hôtel Royale, established by a courier who had married an Englishwoman some years since, offered to us more cleanliness and comfort than we had witnessed since we left home. The hostess died last year.

In these valleys, the early hour of retirement placed us in the difficult situation of fighting our way to the inn-door against a magnificent Savoyard dog, who barked and howled defiance to our at-

tempts, for which he stood some chance of being shot. At length, however, a man, hearing our threats, popped his head out of a window, and entreated our forbearance. We were soon admitted, and refreshments amply provided. I had heard a story from a cousin, Mr. N., of a duel fought here, in which he was a principal, about a dog; and, upon inquiry, learnt that this was the same animal. A party of four young officers, returning from Genoa *en voiture*, stopped here. Mr. N. had brought with him a beautiful little pet dog, which had been presented to him by a lady on his leaving Genoa. Struck by the appearance of the fine dog at the inn, one of the officers bought it; he was fairly informed that the dog had been already sold to an Englishman, who had taken it so far as Lyons, where the dog escaped, and returned (200 miles) to Lanslebourg. The officer who made the purchase intended to fasten it in the same place with the little dog; this Mr. N. objected to, when his brother-officer made some vulgar and offensive allusions to the lady at Genoa from whom the pet had been received. An apology was demanded, and refused—swords were instantly drawn; they fought in the *salle-à-manger*. N. wounded and disarmed his antagonist; an apology for the reflections upon the lady followed; and the party returned to England, punished by having the painful duty to perform all

the way of nursing their wounded companion. The dog, however, was taken and carried safely as far as Paris, where he again escaped, as they suspected by the contrivance of the voiturier, and he returned from Paris—500 miles! I was now informed that the dog had been sold a third time to an Englishman, and again, in spite of precautions having been given, he had returned to Lanslebourg—I am almost afraid to repeat their statement at the inn—from the sea-coast, Calais!!

14<sup>th</sup>.—We had much reason to congratulate ourselves that we had walked on to Lanslebourg, not only in the accommodation and civility we had received at the inn, but in our gaining four hours upon the time of our voiture, for we ascended the mountain whilst the whole scene was clear, and observed, after ascending by the tourniquets of the new road, the village which we had left in the morning lying so far beneath our feet, and almost lost in the magnitude of surrounding objects, so that it could not be distinguished unless sought; the caserne at Lanslebourg, built by Buonaparte, was just perceived, though it would contain 3000 men, with excellent accommodation.

We observed an iris of a remarkably flattened, elliptical form, spanning the great glacier of the Roche Chévrière, above Termignon. This precursor of rain induced us to hasten on, and wander

from the high road in search of a short cut ; but, losing our way, we made it a long one ere we arrived at the inn and post-house on the Mont Cenis : this was before the clouds, which were descending, obscured any of the objects from us. I was struck with the extent and beautiful situation of the lake on the plain, which abounds in delicious trout ; though we could only procure *one*, the monks at the hospice, to whom the fish belong, not having more in store ; but the deficiency was amply amended by a brace of grouse, which my Scotch companion discovered, by *instinct*, for they were concealed, it being three days earlier than the taking of game here was legal. The grouse disappeared before our appetites were spoiled, and we succeeded in adding a blackcock ; the whole of which — tell it not in Gath ! — was expended before our mountain hunger was appeased. Our host modestly demanded fourteen francs from us for our *déjeûné* ; we remonstrated against such an overcharge ; his justification was, “ Messieurs, vous avez mangé trois faisans.” We admitted this, but said we had not eaten any thing else except one small trout ; “ Eh bien, messieurs ; mais vous avez mangé trois faisans.” We got off, however, and satisfied our host, by paying ten francs. Our passports were signed on the mountain, at the station of the carabineers.

The magnificent carriage-road which now exists

over the Mont Cenis, is one of those benefits bestowed by Napoleon upon mankind which will long survive all the injuries inflicted by his ambition. It was begun in 1803, and completed in 1810, at an expense of 300,000*l.*; and so immediate were its benefits, that, in the first year of its being opened, 2911 carriages, 14,037 carts and wagons, and 37,255 horses and mules, traversed the mountain. It was only in the summer, from May to October, that the works could be carried on. During that time the scenes must have been very animated; sometimes, within a short distance, 2000 men were employed—most of them *barracked* on the shores of the lake, 6300 feet above the level of the sea. At sunset a last salute announced the close of the labours of the day; and during half an hour, the reports of blasting the rocks reverberated in the mountains: a little after, the camp was illuminated by the fires of the workmen preparing their evening repast.

Before we left the plain of the Cenis, the rain fell heavily; but as we saw it did not extend far below into the valleys, we decided to walk on to Suza, and before we arrived at the *barrière* of Piedmont the rain had ceased to us. This *barrière* is in the middle of a small basin, called the plain of St. Nicolas, around which, on the right, the road formerly skirted the mountain; but it was so subject to avalanches, that, though well constructed

and much the shortest, it is now avoided, and a bridge is even broken down to prevent the temptation of a shorter road leading into danger. The frequent falls of snow and débris had made the rocks and sides of the mountain smooth, and the accidents were consequently more frequent and certain. To avoid this great danger, a straight road is raised above the plain about twelve feet, and so distant from either side of the valley that the avalanches cannot extend to the present road ; whilst the descent from the Grand Croix, as the Piemont extremity of the plain of Mont Cenis is called, is by a zig-zag road, perfectly safe, cut in the mountain-side. From the little plain of St. Nicolas the road descends gradually the whole way to Susa. Novalise, at the extremity of its valley leading to Susa, is seen far below on the left, and shortly after, at a turn in the road, Susa itself is observed deep and distant in the valley : but the route affords little of the picturesque ; and, either as presenting scenes in nature or a work of art, sinks into insignificance before the route of the Simplon.

The grandest feature in the scenery of this descent is the magnificent mountain mass of the Roche Melon, rising abruptly from the valley nearly 10,000 feet. On its summit was a little chapel, formerly a place of annual pilgrimage, where there was an image of the Virgin, held in



great veneration. This image has now been removed to Susa, for the carved block had not the power of protecting its devotees from many and dreadful accidents which happened in the ascent and descent over paths frightfully dangerous, and in an air difficult, from its rarity, to breathe. The rector of Mont Cenis told Saussure, “ Que ceux qui tomboient là étoient tellement brisés, que l’oreille étoit la plus grande pièce de leurs corps qui demeurerait dans son entier ! ” This worship in *high places* has sunk with the image to Susa ; and low, now, is this “ Diana of the Ephesians ! ”

A little after leaving the post-house of La Molaret, we were advised by some peasant girls to take a shorter road through the village of Venous, which we saw beneath us ; it would make, they said, an hour’s difference in our journey. We followed their advice, and repented of it ; for the descent was above a league entirely over rocks and blocks of stone, so excessively fatiguing, that we have felt ourselves knocked up by going down, and we had the mortification to see our voiture above us, travelling steadily on the road we had left, and it arrived a quarter of an hour before us at Susa, where we found as much discomfort and incivility as weary travellers might have feared at the Hôtel de la Poste. I rambled out, and saw only the triumphal arch of Augustus : if the town have other antiquities, I am at present ignorant of them.

This arch led to the route by the Mont Genève, over the Cottian Alps, a pass of much higher antiquity than that of the Mont Cenis, which it does not appear was even known to the Romans.

15th. — We started at four in the morning for Turin. Soon after we left Susa we crossed the Cenisella, a stream which descends from the Cenis and flows into the Doire. At Busolino this river is passed; and it flows thence on the left of the road until it reaches the Po below Turin.

Among the feudal remains which the traveller passes in the valley of the Doire, below Susa, are those of the picturesque château of St. Jorio; but the most extraordinary ruins are those of the monastery of St. Michel, on the Monte Pirchiriano, above St. Ambrogio. The founder was Hugues de Décousu, who went to Rome and obtained absolution, for some crime which he had committed, from the Pope. Hugues, in his gratitude, promised to build a church on his return, which he did on the Monte Pirchiriano, and consecrated it to St. Michel. Privileges were granted to the new establishment by Pope Silvester, and it soon became, under the rules of St. Benoit, so celebrated for its splendour and power, that its abbots boasted of having founded and restored one hundred and forty churches and rich abbeys in France and Italy.

Saussure and Millin both describe their visits

to the ruins of the monastery, and the latter gives an interesting sketch of its history, but without mentioning the period of its foundation. The difficulty of erecting such an edifice on the mountain must have been very great, as it requires an hour and a half to attain its site. When attained, the mass of ruins appear enormous: a part of these is entered by a large flight of steps. There are many ancient tombs of the monks; some of them are open, and the bodies can be seen in a dry state, like the mummies of the Guanches; they are spoken of as having been objects of curiosity and reverence for many ages. Some Gothic epitaphs remain; one of these marks the tomb of Rodolphe of Montebello, who died in 1359, and another of Sebastian Serrai, a cardinal, who was abbot of this monastery in 1577: there is also an ancient tomb without an inscription, said to be that of Comte Thomas, a bastard of the house of Savoy, who lived in 1233, and who is recorded as a great benefactor to this abbey.

The view from the monastery is described, by those who have visited it, as magnificent, extending, from the vast ramparts of the Cenis, through the lower valley of the Doire, which winds beneath the monastery, and enriches a scene that extends to Turin, the Monte Superga, and the extensive plains which, beyond these, melt into the horizon.

On our way to Turin we passed by Rivoli, the summer residence of the court of Sardinia ; soon after, a high wind raised the dust, and obscured occasionally every object around us. We reached Turin at five o'clock. The douaniers were civil on our entrance—perhaps they were too near head-quarters to be otherwise ; but I have observed them to be usually in extremes—very obliging or very troublesome. We took warm baths on our arrival, and rested at the Pension Suisse.

16th.—By attending myself to my passport, I got all the necessary signatures to it to-day ; though, by an error of the French secretary, I was obliged to receive two of them twice. I agreed with a man for a cabriolet to take me to Chatillon in two days for twenty-six francs, and four francs *buono mano*, if he conducted himself well. In passing the Musée, which is undergoing repair, I was struck with an Egyptian statue, more beautiful and perfect than any other Egyptian sculpture that I remember to have seen.

I was put to great inconvenience by the inattention of Frères Nigra and fils, bankers of Turin, to whom Herries' bills are addressed. When I first called, after repeated ringing and knocking, a dirty, squinting boy opened a door, and said there was no person within : upon hearing what I wanted, he said I must call again at seven o'clock, as the Signor was taking his *siesta*. I went at seven, and

saw two ladies, who said M. Nigra was gone to the theatre ; but assured me, if I would call at nine I should see him. I stated my business, and complained strongly of the injury which this delay might produce, and the urgent necessity which there was for my seeing M. Nigra, as I had made arrangements for leaving Turin, and by his inattention I had lost a day. They repeated that I should find him at home at nine. At nine I went again, and the same persons told me he was gone into the country, and that I must call again at nine the next morning !\*

This is the second day of some authorised idleness, called a *festa*. I was amused by seeing the Race of Atalanta in tapestry, hung outside the church of the SS. Trinita, in the Contrada di Doro Grossa ; and in the Piazza di Sto. Carlo a peasant had a wax figure of St. Anthony of Padua, holding the infant Christ in his arms, in a sort of show-box : within the folding doors were representations of St. Anthony's miracles. The showman was selling coronæ, crosses, lives of St. Anthony, and portraits of the saint, printed on

\* I wrote from Turin to Messrs. Herries and Co., complaining of the conduct of their correspondent : this was instantly attended to by them ; and on my return to England they shewed me a letter from Messrs. Nigra, apologising for the inconvenience they had put me to, and promising better behaviour.

small pieces of cloth, with tape strings, to be worn as amulets. His *hurdy-gurdy* drew a crowd, and his wares—sold at a sous or two each—were first touched against the wax figure, to receive the virtue of curing diseases. With each, a prayer was muttered; and in this way the vagabond was driving a great business, displaying a gravity in the farce he was acting, which even Liston might have envied.

17th.—I parted early from my pleasant travelling companion, Mr. W. M<sup>r</sup> Farlane, who left Turin at the same hour for Genoa. He with great kindness offered me his purse, to remedy part of the inconvenience to which I had been subjected by Frères Nigra's neglect of business for the siesta, the theatre, and the campagna; and, to prevent further delay, I accepted his aid. My conductor was one of those accomplished Piemontese who are acquainted with their own horrid jargon, and know no other language. After repeated efforts, I fairly gave up all hope of passing any part of the two days we were to be together in conversation,—it was as unlike French or Italian as English is to either. We breakfasted at Caluso, where I was served with dirty broth, and a dish of green capsicums, which, when I declined, a Piemontese near me devoured; the wine and bread, however, were excellent. This part of the country has a bad character. About a fortnight since, a

poor fellow, who had been to Turin to receive some money, was assailed by three assassins, who robbed him, and then shot him in the thigh; he died five days after, leaving a large family: he described the brigands, but they have not yet been taken. The roads between Milan and Turin are said to be infested by deserters and criminals. The line of the Alps, seen on the approach to Ivrea, from the Viso to beyond Mont Rosa, presented a beautiful appearance; their forms and colours, under the effect of the rising sun, were magnificent. Before I arrived at Caluso, I had a fine view of Mont Cervin and Mont Rosa.

On leaving Caluso, my guide drove with all the confidence of a perfect knowledge of his route—but direct towards Milan. I was sure that he was wrong; my remonstrances, however, were not understood. At the end of about two miles, I met some persons, of whom I inquired the route; and my able conductor was obliged to right about, through Caluso, and take the true route to Ivrea. The country is rich in vines, Indian corn, and hemp. We arrived at Ivrea about twelve o'clock. This city, which I visited in my first journey, is finely situated at the entrance of the Val d'Aosta, and abounds with picturesque objects,—the banks of the Doire, its bridges, and the *feudal-looking* round towers of the prison. The scene from an old fort near the

road leading to Aosta is very fine; the prisons are in the fore-ground, and, beyond the city, the Doire is seen winding into the rich plains of the Po. Two remarkable ridges of land run out on either side of the Val d'Aosta, extending several miles, their sides clothed with vineyards: it was over the northern ridge that I passed last year, in going to Biella. Ivrea appears to have much commercial bustle, at least for a town in Piemont: it is a great *dépôt* for the iron manufactured in the Val d'Aosta. Slept at the Ecu de France.

18<sup>th</sup>.—It was five before we started. In two hours we reached St. Martin's; passed its single arch thrown over the deep ravine of the Lesa; and thence proceeded, through Donas and Ford Bard, to Verrex, where, as I was poisoned by wine last year, I was cautious enough to avoid drinking any now. About a league and a half above Verrex we reached that part of the road which is, perhaps, the finest in the Val d'Aosta—the deep ravine that divides Mont Jovet from the rock upon which stands the *château* of St. Germain; its situation is strikingly grand, as it is seen on approaching it up the valley. Soon after passing this defile, we crossed the Pont des Sarrasins, and passed through St. Vincent, famous for its baths; and at two o'clock arrived at Chatillon, chez Jean Guarda, my last year's guide through Piemont: I had promised to



return, and he appeared pleased that I had kept my word. In the evening, Jean drove me to the baths of St. Vincent, about half a mile out of the village. The view from a walk cut around the hill near the baths, is one of the most beautiful in the Val d'Aosta.

Whilst looking upon the mountain across the valley, Jean pointed out to me a spot where a bear was killed in February last. Several cows had been destroyed by this animal, and many of the inhabitants had sought to take or shoot him in ambush, but without success. At length a farmer suggested, that across the bear's track, which had been discovered, a line should be so placed, that, if touched, it should discharge eight or ten guns, with their muzzles directed upon the spot. The place was watched day after day, and listeners were constantly alive to the expected discharge of the fire-arms. More than a week passed away, when one evening the *feu de joie* was heard in the mountain. Great numbers of the inhabitants ascended to the spot where their scheme had triumphed : the bear had received the contents of the guns, and, mortally wounded, had rolled down the wooded side of the mountain. Traced by his blood, he was found in the agonies of death ; but it still required caution and courage to despatch him, when his enormous carcass was borne in triumph to Chatillon : his weight was ascertained

to be 25 rous, or 625 lbs. English. Besides the destruction of their enemy, the people enjoyed the feast which he afforded, and received the public reward from the state, or commune, of 200 francs, the sum offered for the head of a bear. 50 francs are paid for the head of a wolf, and 100 for the head of a she-wolf.

Jean informed me, that ten days since, the pastor of St. Vincent threw himself over the Pont des Sarrasins, of which the height is terrific, in despair, because the Bishop of Aosta did not think so well of him as he had thought of himself.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Val Tournanche—Ascent to Briel—Châlets of Mont Jumont—Mountain Accommodation—Detention at the Châlets by a Snow-storm—Ascent of Mont Cervin—Préposé—Smugglers—Glaciers—Summit—Scene from the Glaciers—Learned Guide—Tourmente—Hasty Descent—Disruption of the Glaciers—Arrival at the Curé's of Zermatt—Illness—English Travellers—Descent of the Valley of St. Nicolas to Visp.

*August 19th.*—It was eight o'clock before I could start from Chatillon, owing to the difficulty which I had in procuring, at an earlier hour, a horse to carry me to Val Tournanche. Jean Guarda accompanied me. The road skirts for several miles one side of the valley, through which rushes the river that descends from Mont Cervin. The first part of our route was sheltered from the sun, for its direction lay through a magnificent forest of chestnuts; the mountains on each side rise towering over the glen to an enormous height. The fearful effects of their débris in the winter is not only marked by the enormous blocks of serpentine which have fallen, but by the crosses erected to point out the spot upon which some poor traveller had

become the victim of the disruption. Numerous aqueducts, believed by the natives to have been Roman works, are seen on the sides of the valley, built on arches; they convey water for irrigation. The route delightfully varies the whole way to the village of Val Tournanche, which is composed of nearly twenty farms and cottages, studding the side of the hill. This is the station of the Piemont douaniers, and here Stanfield and I encountered the rascals who had behaved so ill to us last year;\* they, however, were removed, and the present brigadier, as he is called, and his men, behaved with great civility.

At Val Tournanche I procured a guide, Jean Baptiste Pension, to conduct me across the Cervin to Zermatt, better known on the Piemontese side by the name of Praborgne. After taking refreshment at a sort of inn, my guide and I started on our ascent to Briel. Nothing could exceed the wildness of the savage glen through which the torrent of the Tournanche, which descends from Mont Cervin, rushes with horrid violence, sometimes passing so far beneath the traveller's feet that it is only heard, or, if seen in its deep obscurity, its white foam only is distinguished; the path, if it deserves the name, sometimes skirting a precipice, of which the base cannot be seen. Here

\* See page 49.

the torrent immerses into darkness ; and there it has no wilder character than that of a common mountain-torrent. On entering the little plain of Briel the air became very cold : the mountaineers were getting in their scanty hay harvest. We determined, in order to shorten to-morrow's route, to pass through this summer hamlet to the highest châlets on the ascent of Mont Jumont. The spot was very dreary, surrounded by immense glaciers and peaks of mountains ; the vast pyramid of the Cervin, wreathed in clouds, was the most striking feature in the scene. In this, one of the grandest of nature's amphitheatres, with mountains covered with snows and glaciers, in unchanged whiteness of ages, for its walls, the *mind* was overwhelmed : it was not its insignificance, for it could contemplate this scene ; but it felt subdued by the vastness of the objects contemplated. We passed the little chapel at Briel, where service is performed, at a festa held *once* a year only, by the curé of Val Tournanche. Soon after, we ascended from the plain, and reached the châlets of Mont Jumont. My guide took me to one belonging to a poor woman, who remained, with her sister and two children, in these the highest pasturages in Europe, to make cheese and butter during their short summer of six weeks. I had my choice of sleeping in the same hovel with the woman and her children, or removing to a châlet belonging

to another family. The smoke in her's made me decide upon the latter, where a rug was thrown upon a heap of hay, which promised a comfortable lodging. The man to whom this *châlet* belonged was employed in scalding off the hair, and otherwise cleaning, three marmots, which he had shot during the day. The place was extremely filthy; but fatigue asks no apology for dirty lodgings; I threw myself, wrapt in my cloak, upon my bed, and saw the stars through the holes in the roof. I was soon assailed by thousands of fleas, &c. ; to sleep was impossible. Below me, in a sort of cellar, were a dozen cows enjoying the pleasures of the Hole of Calcutta, whose lowing and tinkling of bells, added to nameless smells, would have defied Hercules to sleep after his labours. Something worse, however, to an Alpine traveller was occurring without than any annoyance within. The weather had evidently changed; it lightened, and I felt the rain dropping and splashing through the ill-tiled roof upon my place—not of rest, but of torment. It was totally dark, and I lay many hours before I saw daylight pour in through the holes which so readily admitted the rain. It seemed to have ceased; but upon crawling to the door, I found that it had only changed for the worse: one vast scene of snow surrounded me, and it continued to fall fast and thick. I returned to my hay, to conjure up

a thousand miseries from the delay, which was certain, in such a place. About six o'clock my guide entered, and said it would be impossible to attempt the passage, and that our only chance was to ascend with some mules and their drivers, who had gone down to Chatillon for wine, that on their return the mules might form a path on the fresh snow which had fallen on the glaciers.

20th.—I returned to my poor woman's hut, and regretted that I had left it, as I should at least have been drier there than in the one—I cannot say that I either slept or sheltered in. For my breakfast, I drank some excellent milk, and ate a portion of a small loaf which I had brought with me from Val Tournanche. Mid-day arrived with little alteration of weather: the snow had changed to rain only. I occasionally crawled out of an opening; nicknamed a door, four feet high, which I was always obliged to re-enter backwards, because it opened against the slope of the mountain. The snow was now rapidly melting in the valley, but the mountains had had their wigs newly trimmed, as if the dressing were to serve a week. The guide again made his appearance, to say that the mules remained at Val Tournanche, and that tomorrow being Sunday they would not be allowed to travel; they would therefore remain till Monday, and I must rest contented, if possible, at least another night. The day passed drearily. I helped

to boil the polenta—milk and water into which the flour of Indian corn was stirred, and the whole seasoned with salt. If I had not seen it prepared, I should have eaten some ; but at the time my disgust exceeded my appetite. It was very cold ; yet we were obliged to economise the fuel, as we had very little within the chalet ; and the small stock of rhododendron, the only shrub at this elevation that supplies the fire, was soaked by the weather, which came on too suddenly, and at this early season too unexpectedly, to have induced the precaution of keeping a larger stock within. My poor and kind hostess frequently came to me, to know what I would have to eat, as if she had a choice of food. She procured for me during the day three eggs ; except these, she had nothing to give but milk and curds, and bread baked once a-year, at Michaelmas ; and baking day was nearly come round again. It was miserably cold : stamping my feet and slapping my hands were the only means of warming them, for the fire was too scanty. The melted snow ran into the hut, and formed pools. To pass the time, I assisted in butter-making, rocking the youngest child to sleep, and writing letters to England : my eyes smarted with the smoke of the wet shrub-wood, which I tried in vain to blow into a blaze. By way of a little variety, I was indulged with the squalls and disputations of the noisy children.



I prepared for my second night's rest by placing the high end of a form, with only two legs remaining, against another large stool, which was generally used as a table. The lower end of my couch came as near the ashes of the hearth as with safety it could be put. Upon these a bundle of hay was thrown, and made a comfortable bed enough. Here I should have slept well, but a boisterous and overjoyed assembly of fleas prevented it: those of this hovel having, as I am conceited enough to fancy, given a grand entertainment, in honour of my coming, to the fleas of the other *châlet*; and I verily believe not one refused the invitation. I of course was served up; and, to judge of what remained of me, I think the rascals had *gôût* enough to relish my being half smoked.

Let not decorum be shocked! I slept in the same den with the mistress, her sister, and the children. Of mine host I have seen nothing: he is at work in the valleys. The mistress and the eldest child slept in a crib in one corner—her sister and the youngest in another, and I about ten feet off, on my bed of dry delicious mountain-hay.

21st.—At six in the morning my guide came in to say, that he would descend to Val Tournanche to the first mass, and return before eleven with another man to assist in crossing the mountain, as the snow was deep, and he would not venture alone; that waiting for the mules might detain

me two or three days longer, and we had better proceed. The mountains were almost clear of clouds, and appearances were favourable. A little before twelve, he returned with another guide, Père Antoine Maynot, when, after a draught of cream and a little brandy, I took leave of my good-tempered hostess and her dirty children, and began the ascent of Mont Cervin. At the end of about two hours we approached the glaciers. We were met, and accompanied part of the way, by two douaniers, who, from the station at Val Tournanche, go in turn to remain in a hovel very elevated, which commands the descent from the pass. One of them I had met two days since at Val Tournanche; he had walked from their station to offer me *crampons* for my boots in crossing the glaciers. How different from the conduct of the same class of men last year! The duty which they have to perform on this frontier, as the Swiss are active smugglers, must be very severe; even now the snow lay deep at their station. There is little contraband at present carried on compared to what there was during Buonaparte's *blockade* of England; then the temptation to smuggle was very great. My guide pointed out a terrific pass through which, to avoid the *préposé*, he and four others had carried bales of British muslins consigned from an English house to a Swiss agent at Visp, who had engaged these men, at four louis each, to

convey a load of such goods to Verrex. A cross was pointed out to me as marking the spot where an active smuggler, who had long evaded the douaniers, was shot.

We proceeded, over a wet, loose, and fatiguing path, to a great elevation, whence the surrounding scene of snow, scathed peaks, and sterility, was most sublime. When we had attained the extreme height of this loose and dangerous ascent, with clouds, glaciers, and even mountains, beneath our feet, we entered upon the fresh snow over the glaciers. We were the first to pass after the storm, and we sunk knee-deep in the snow at every step. One of my guides walked a-head, searching with a long baton for crevices; we slipped occasionally into small ones concealed by the snow, and sunk to the middle, but we scrambled out, sometimes with, sometimes without assistance. The most fatiguing part of a walk over deep snow arises from the jerking consolidation beneath the feet, particularly in the ascent: where the leg was first placed in walking, it sunk to a certain depth; in advancing the body on that leg, it sunk deeper, with a violent and fatiguing jerk. The sun, when he shone upon us, poured down with excessive fervency. During the entire pass, I did not once feel it cold, though sometimes we were so entirely enveloped in clouds that we could not distinguish the small sticks which had been put up to point

out dangerous situations, or to direct the passengers to straight lines from point to point. When we encountered two such sticks, it indicated a bridge of ice across a crevice, which required great caution. We were above five hours on the glaciers, of which the ascent employed about three and a half. On attaining the summit, I was disappointed in finding little trace of the *châlet* of Saussure, or of the spot always, as it was described, free from snow. There is a vast accumulation of rocks on the summit, with the sides too steep to retain the snow; it is probable, also, that the unfavourable circumstances under which I passed it might have been an exception to its general appearance and character. The changes of weather at this great height, above 11,000 English feet, are inconceivably sudden; at one time, when the sun shone out, we observed the vast mountains of Mont Rosa, and their enormous glaciers—the valleys beneath our feet sinking into indistinctness—the Bernese Alps, beyond the Valais, and, more striking than any other object, the beautiful pyramid of the Mont Cervin, springing 5000 feet from its bed of glaciers—all burst upon the eye at once with unimagined effect and grandeur. In five minutes a change came o’er the scene; and all was concealed—the spot upon which we stood appeared a white circle, its outline blending at a

short distance with the clouds—and we were alone, without an object visible beyond the circle.

I had felt severely the extreme rarity of the air in ascending, seldom advancing twenty steps without resting; the angle of ascent, too, in some places was considerable. Once, when I was gasping, the guide roused me by, “*Courage, monsieur! personne reste ici sans mourant.*” I exerted myself, stopping frequently; but when the highest point was attained, felt perfectly free in breathing. I observed a great number of flies on the snow, even at the greatest elevation, where they must have sunk in their high and long flight, for some were torpid. Many were curious in form, and beautiful in colour. I saw, also, on the snow and confines of the glaciers, large flights of snow-birds. I could not help thinking of Dr. Johnson’s comment upon the crow in the Highlands.

On attaining the summit, we prepared, in high spirits, to take some bread and wine and eggs, which Pension the guide had wisely brought from Val Tournanche: the new guide Maynot began an amusing account of the passage of Hannibal by the Mont Cervin. The remains of an old redoubt, built by the Valaisans, which it was very difficult to trace, my learned guide said was raised by the Carthaginian general, and quoted Tite Live and Polybe as authority. But before I could receive

either this mental or our corporeal food, a sudden change in the weather occurred : the snow began to fall thickly, and whirl in alarming eddies round us. My guides hastily packed up, and, dreading the tourmente, started down the Swiss side of the mountain with great rapidity, sinking deeply in the snow at each step, but without much fatigue, and affording enjoyment enough to raise shouts of laughter as one or the other rolled over. I had put on a mask of gauze, with which I had provided myself in ascending : I was glad to employ it against the painful reflection from the snow : it was equally useful to protect the face from the fine hard particles of snow during the tourmente. In descending, an enormous rent in the ice was shewn to me ; the consequence of the breaking of the glaciers last year, when I was prevented from proceeding this way. A merchant and his horse sunk for ever in it in crossing, and, say the guides, with 10,000 francs in his possession. We soon descended into fine weather, and, from the bottom of the glacier, after having been five hours upon it, I enjoyed a splendid view of the Cervin — it is from the Swiss side that it is seen to the greatest advantage. I made a sketch at a fortunate moment, when it was perfectly clear ; I had not removed fifty steps from the spot where I drew it, when the mountain appeared to wrap itself in clouds with such sudden

concealment, that even my guide was struck with it, and called my attention to the fact.

The descent was long, difficult, and tedious, to Zermatt: we passed some granges higher than this village, and left above it in the valley the commune of Zmutt. At length we reached the side of the torrent which led to the village, and arrived at the hospitable and comfortable house of the curé at nine o'clock. I met there three German students on an excursion to the mountain to collect plants and catch butterflies. Some refreshment was soon provided; and as I was excessively fatigued, the curé, with a kindness which I long refused, insisted upon my occupying his own bed.

22*d.*.—I awoke fevered and ill. At an early hour three Englishmen called upon me to know the state of the glaciers, as they intended to cross to the Val d'Aosta; they prepared to start immediately upon my report. I asked if either was a medical man; the youngest of the party answered for the rest, No; but as he never travelled without medicine, he had at my service calomel, rhubarb, castor oil, magnesia, salts, &c.; it was impossible not to be amused even whilst obliged. I think no one but a member of the Bull family would thus have borne about Apothecaries' Hall with him. But I must not record an ungrateful joke; his calomel restored me to health.

I sketched the Cervin from the curé's window, and remained at his house for the day. A chubby boy, a member of the family, was scandalously like the curé, and his buxom housekeeper laughed whilst she owned him as her son. I learnt that within the bishoprick of Sion, the vow of celibacy, if not more frequently broken than in other Catholic communities, is not so often wrapt in the cloak of hypocrisy. The jokes of the Germans who had been quizzing the housekeeper, had aided the suspicious likeness of the boy in betraying the secret.

23d. — I arose weak, but free from fever. It is rarely that severe illness overtakes a traveller on his journey — either his general health is improved by the air and exercise to which he is exposed, or his mind has greater energies; but I have often felt, that, at home, and with the facility of access to a doctor, such symptoms as would have insured a week's confinement have been shaken off here in an hour's walk. I inquired for a horse; not one remained in the commune: the English party had engaged the only horse left; the others were sent, as I knew, for wine into Piedmont. I decided upon walking quietly to St. Nicolas, about twelve miles down the valley, and procured the assistance of a young man to carry my baggage. When I left the curé he would not take more than five francs for all the



trouble I had occasioned. He was a kind and hospitable man, and his handmaiden as good tempered a creature as ever kept a house in order; to me, who had suffered from fatigue, they were all kindness and attention. We descended the valley, and in two hours reached Tesch, where the English party had tried to rest, but where *my apothecary* told me he had devoted a night *au chasse de punaises*.

I found the name of the next village to be Randor, and not In-der-wild, as given in Kellar's map of Switzerland, and the next below Herrbuggen; he writes it Fluss. These places on the borders have frequently two names, the German and the Piemontese, and are sometimes productive of confusion; but neither of those in Kellar are recognised. Near Herrbuggen a fine glacier descends from the sides of the Schallhorn. The snowy peaks of this mountain are usually pointed out to the traveller towards the Simplon, when at Visp in the Valais, as Mont Rosa.

In about four hours from Zermatt we arrived at the house of the curé of St. Nicolas, where I obtained refreshment: his mule, the only one in the village, was lent; and my next chance was to walk on to Stalden, two hours. I felt so perfectly recovered, as not to hesitate about doing this. I met some persons of Visp who spoke French; and upon my mentioning my intention of passing the

Moro, they recommended to me, as a guide, a man who was present. He was a native of Saas, who knew the route perfectly. I engaged him to take my luggage on to Visp, and to conduct me over the Moro to Vogona. His patois was a sad jargon, but we contrived to understand each other.

When I reached Stalden I was again disappointed. No horse was to be had; and my impatience to receive letters at Visp determined me to walk on. Though I felt weak when I left Zermatt in the morning, my long walk, instead of increasing, had removed my weakness, and I added two hours more to my day's labour.

At Visp I heard from *home*: it is only he who knows the value of the word that can feel the heart's refreshment from this source, when he is rambling amidst scenes where the difficulty and uncertainty of communication is so great. I was recommended to the Cheval Blanc as the best inn: it was dirty and extravagant, and the ill-conditioned landlady, upon my expressing a wish to retire soon, and before she thought I had eaten or drank enough, received my complaint of fatigue after illness, with a *oui!* not to be easily forgotten: an evil spirit must have prompted the word, and brandy tuned the organ of utterance!

## CHAPTER XV.

Valley of Saas — Ravines — Records of Accidents — Aballa — Plain and Village of Saas — Conduct of the Curé — Twilight on Mont Fée — Allmengal — Moraine — Lake and Châlets of Destal — Passes of the Moro — Ancient Road — Glaciers — Bear — Summit — Splendid View of Mont Rosa — Descent to Macugnaga — Inn — Catholic Relics.

*Aug. 24th.*—After having made some sketches, and procured a mule to take me to the foot of the Moro pass, I left Visp in the morning, about half-past eight o'clock, and reached Stalden again in two hours ; we rested there, and at the inn took some bread and cheese and bad wine : the daughter of the host was very beautiful, but, unfortunately, lame. We crossed the torrent of the Visp into the *defile*, rather than the *valley*, of Saas, by a bridge which, thrown across the rivers that descend from Mont Moro and Mont Cervin, spans here, at their confluence, a deep and rugged gorge, through which the united waters rush with violence, to join the Rhone at Visp. I endeavoured, but without success, to get some point of view where I could at once see the bridge

and the water, but this was impossible ; though the rocks on either side were much above the bridge, the ravine was too narrow, and the banks above the rocks too steep and dangerous, to allow an approach near enough. I obtained, however, a slight sketch from the Saas road. My guide was rather a puzzler ; his Italian, as he called it, was more difficult to understand than his German ; we got on, however, very well. He was a good-tempered fellow, with a perpetual grin and singular laugh ; and as he was now in his native valley, almost all the persons whom we met he was acquainted with, and to all he had to tell, and with evident joy on his part, how he had caught an *Englander*.

The valley of Saas is the narrowest that I have yet passed in Switzerland ; the sides were excessively steep, and terminated in a deep, narrow bed, through which the river tore its foaming way. I had to cross it three times, and over bridges so ill constructed, with only a few pines laid across, that to me, who had been rather inured to such places, the sensation of crossing on a mule was horrible ; the planks moved loosely under the animal's feet, and the whole fabric shook as if an infant could have overthrown it. Some bridges in the valley are at fearful heights above the torrent : one of these, which I sketched, about two miles above Stalden, serves for communication between

some cottages and the opposite mountain. Its height above the water is from 200 to 300 feet; and the cottages are so placed on the cliff, that a line dropt from them would hang far over the torrent on the other side. I have no where else seen such rugged wildness; the huge old larches which overhung the deep gorges of the river were of immense size, and their giant limbs and roots, thrown about in a savage grandeur, was quite in accordance with the surrounding scenery. The ravine slopes steeply to the torrent from Stalden to Saas, except at the little plain of Aballa; and the small quantities of barley raised, is grown in such difficult situations, that one wonders that the labour is not an obstacle to any attempt to cultivate it.

I have no where seen so many indications of loss of life from accidents as in this valley. The usual evidence is a cross erected on the fatal spot, that passers-by may pray for the soul of the person who was killed there.\* Of these, I sometimes saw three, four, and even five, clustered together, either marking an accident fatal to many at the same time, or the recurrence of falling rocks in the same dangerous place, and a succession of victims. Between Stalden and Saas there are

\* In Italy the crosses are placed from the same religious motive, but the cause has generally been assassinations.

more than 150 of these crosses ; some bore the date of eighty or ninety years since, others of the last winter. The initials of the unfortunate, and the date of the accident, were the only records. I observed a very fine fall of a torrent, which descends from the mountains that divide the valley of Saas from that of Visp ; and about two hours distant from Stalden I arrived at the first little plain in the valley, in which were the village and church of Aballa. Soon again the valley became a defile, and the road, or path, was traced with difficulty among the masses of rock and débris of the mountains. At the end of two hours more I entered the fertile plain of Saas ; which is about three quarters of a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile wide, surrounded by glaciers and mountains ; the most striking of these is Mont Fée, whose bright snows surmount the dark pines which clothe its lowest slopes on the western side of the plain. I was informed by my guide that there is a village at the foot of the glaciers of Mont Fée, where nearly a hundred persons reside all the year, their habitations almost touching the ice.

The plain of Saas is so strikingly contrasted with the savage wildness and sterility of the route that leads to it, and the enormous mountain masses which surround it, that one hails its connexion with Mont Fée as the fairy valley. It contains two or three villages : the first which we passed

through is Tamata; but this is so closely united with Saas as scarcely to be distinguished from it.

My guide was a native of a village on the other side of the stream, to which he sent the owner of the mule, who had accompanied us from Visp, to announce his return to his family, whilst he conducted me to the curé; but every body knew my guide, and all inquired who and what I was, where he had found me, and where he was to conduct me. I grew impatient of these repeated delays, and pressed him to proceed to the house of the curé: it was a day of festa—some arrangement between the Virgin and the priests to waste the time of the people. Here I found a party at cards. The curé arose, and, with cold civility—I rather ought to say incivility—told me his house was not an auberge. I said I was perfectly aware of it, and also that there was not one in his village; if there had been, I should not have troubled him, but that circumstance gave me a greater claim to his courtesy; that his parishioner, my guide, had, as a matter of course, conducted me to his house; and it was not the first time I had sought and received from the curé of a sequestered place that assistance which as a weary traveller I required. He at last shewed me to a chamber, and prepared two or three dishes of macaroni, haricot, and other maigre, of which I partook heartily. He then became more inquisi-

tive and communicative, inquired my object in the journey, and gave me some information upon the route. He said that after four hours it would be absolutely necessary to walk to Macugnaga; that he had not himself crossed the Mont Moro; but he was in constant communication with those who had. He repeated the circumstance of the road having been formerly the route of the courier from Piemont, though it was now in so ruined a condition: he had heard his father and mother speak of their having rode on mules into both the Val Anzasca and the Val Antrona; and that many of the peasants of Saas still went by the latter valley to the fairs and markets of Domo d'Ossola. He recommended my starting as early as three o'clock to-morrow morning, and promised me coffee before I set out, and wine, &c. for the journey.

25th. — Jan Petro Andermatt, the guide, knocked punctually at three at my door; and on descending from my chamber, the curé opened the door of his sleeping-room to receive my remuneration. I entered; his *chère amie* (housekeeper) was sitting half-dressed on her bed, which, except when in use, fitted in under that of the curé's like a drawer. Here, like Ruth at the feet of Boaz, but with more impure association, it was evident the curé's handmaiden slept. This mode of forming additional sleeping-places is common



in the Valais. The curé had promised me coffee, &c. in the morning before starting, and wine for refreshment in the mountains, but nothing was provided; and when I offered to pay him three or four francs, he pocketed an *écu neuf*—six francs, which I gave him, and bowed me out without giving me any change. I felt annoyed at his discourtesy and selfishness, so contrasted with the conduct of the worthy old curé of Zermatt.

Just as we left the little plain of Saas, twilight began to brighten the summits of Mont Fée, and the snowy ridges of the western mountains which enclosed the plain above a forest of pines. The effect was singularly beautiful; the peculiar tone of twilight relieved the sharp forms from a dark sky, which was still studded with stars, and below, the faint light, subsiding to the pines, failed yet to dispel the darkness of the valley. The path soon afterwards ascended by some cottages, over a road as rugged and difficult as that which I passed yesterday. In about an hour we entered a plain, and passed the village of Micra—the scenes became more sterile, the larches were stunted, and the evidence of considerable elevation was seen in a scanty vegetation. Another hour brought us to Allmengal, rather a large village, and where the path which conducts to the Val Antrona branches off to the left. A little above, on the right, is another pass across the mountains to Zermatt; it presented a terrific

appearance, over snows and glaciers, but Jan told me that it was without danger, and that it was not necessary to be upon the ice more than an hour and a half. Neither of these routes are indicated in Kellar; whilst those from Eringerthal and Ein-fishthal, between the Valais and Piemont, have no existence but in his map.

Nearly an hour from Allmengal, over stones, rocks, and brushwood of rhododendron, brought us to what appeared to be a termination of the valley, a large glacier, from beneath which the torrent of the Saas issued: so completely was our path closed, that we saw no means of further progress; but the guide directed our ascent, on the left, on the *moraine*—the rocks and loose stones which skirted the ice; and after a short but very fatiguing effort we entered upon the glacier. I was disposed to leave the mule below, but Jan told me I should again find it useful; we therefore drove it on: but a difficulty arose in regaining the earth again; the edges of the glacier were so broken at the end of the path upon it, that both the men were obliged to roll rocks and stones to enable the mule to leave the ice safely; yet after this I was surprised to see a tolerably well-constructed road, which led to a lake larger than that of Combal in the Allée Blanche, but presenting a much more sterile appearance. This

lake is formed by the glaciers, over which we had climbed, that closed the valley, acting as a dam. Near the borders of the lake were two or three miserable châteaux. On our way we skirted this desolate little lake of Mont Mor, or Destal; yet some goatherds had fixed their summer huts on its borders, for the sake of the scanty but rich herbage found upon the few patches among the stones, in the spaces left by the glaciers which swept down to the borders of the lake. Enormous masses of rock had fallen from the mountains, and added to the wildness of the scene, of which some of the peaks of the Cima de Jazi and Mont Rosa formed the background.

Still higher, however, than the lake are fine pasturages; for in half an hour from its borders we reached the châteaux of Destal, where 200 cows, besides goats, are fed. The finding of such a community in a spot so elevated, was a cause for surprise and pleasure: if I had been aware of the existence of such a place, I should have preferred resting there, and have exerted myself to attain it last night, rather than have slept at Saas; and I could easily have accomplished this, for I did not leave Visp yesterday till nearly nine o'clock, and I rested two hours during the heat of the day at Stalden. Compared, too, with my *accommodations* at Mont Jumont, this place afforded more comforts, and

the persons and habits of the peasantry on the Swiss side were much cleaner. We rested an hour, and obtained excellent milk, cheese, and eggs.

Above Destal, I left the discovery of a path to the mule, for I could not perceive any; and after an hour and a half we attained the foot of the glaciers of the Moro, where it was necessary to dismount, and send back the mule to Visp.

The appearance of this alpine barrier defied conjecture upon the situation or direction of the path by which it was to be traversed. From the spot on which I dismounted, one might almost perceive the summit of the glaciers which form the passes into Piemont. All the maps and descriptions that I have seen, mention the pass of the Moro as leading only to Macugnaga: the truth is, that there are two passes on the Moro—one of these leads to Campiole, in the Val Anzasca, below the gorge of Pesterana; the other, which turns to the right on attaining the summit, was called by the guide the Pass of Macugnaga, from its conducting to that place. This leads also to the base of the Mont Rosa.

The scene was more sterile than any that I remembered in the Alps. The rhododendron, the last shrub which the traveller sees in his ascent of these regions, and the scanty but sweet herbage sought for the cows and goats by the peasants in the establishment of their châteaux, had long been left

below us, and only a few Alpine ranunculi, gentians, and other mountain flowers, such as are found in the highest regions, could be seen in fissures of the rocks and in moist situations. Here we were surrounded by the débris of the mountains, brought down by storms and the disintegrating work of ages. These formed the sides of the valley; its end, which seemed abruptly to defy our progress, was a vast glacier descending from the eternal snows of the surrounding mountains. Amidst these it was impossible to conjecture the route, but my guide told me that it lay to the right, and pointed to what appeared to be the perpendicular face of a vast precipice of granite. It was impossible to believe that a path could be found there; with some difficulty, however, I climbed over the rocks and stones as Jan directed me, until something like a path appeared, but which was interrupted by a steep ridge of snow descending at least 500 feet to the base of the glaciers. I was ahead of the guide, and looked with some horror upon this danger; for if I had slipped I should have slid to the bottom with more velocity than a flying adventurer descends from a tower by a rope. I cautiously dug foot-holes, and then walked safely over this slope, which was not more than thirty feet across. I waited to see how Jan would get over, laden as he was with my baggage. To shew his contempt for my caution and foot-holes, he tucked his bâton

under his arm, and walked across it with as much carelessness and confidence as if it had been on the route of the Simplon.

Soon after passing this ridge, I found the old road, by which the courier used anciently to pass to and from Piemont: it was really, for a mule-road, well constructed with paved stones; its width varied from five or six to eight or ten feet. This road could not be observed from below. A quarter of an hour's ascent brought us to the glaciers, over which it was necessary to pass for about twenty minutes. A little snow had recently fallen, not sufficient to fill up some foot-steps left by the peasants, who in the summer frequently pass this way. Thousands of curious flies lay torpid or dead on the snow. Near the summit we saw the recent track, in the fresh snow, in the direction of the Moro pass, of an enormous bear. My fears, perhaps, made me think that it could not have been much less in size than the large bear killed opposite to Chatillon.\* Jan looked around rather aghast; but finding that I had pistols *three* inches long (!), recovered his self-possession. We rested a few minutes upon some bare rocks, on the summit, 9100 feet above the level of the sea, where a rude cross has been placed, which is now nearly decayed. The view

\* See page 220.

looking towards the châlets and lake of Destal, and the valley of Saas, was most desolate. On winding round by the rocks on the summit, Mont Rosa burst upon me with a vastness and splendour to which I cannot do justice by description. Clouds were forming near and beneath me, and in a few minutes the scene of enchantment closed, except when the clouds rolled away, and some portions appeared through them with a magic of effect that has left an impression upon my mind with which every other Alpine recollection suffers in comparison.

The morning is usually, in these alpine regions, the clearest part of the day; and two or three, or even one hour earlier than I attained the summit of the pass, the scene of Mont Rosa would have been quite clear. The chances, then, are in favour of a traveller having a more advantageous passage by sleeping at Destal, rather than by resting at Saas; and he would not be obliged to the sulky curé for accommodations, little better, and not half so civilly and cheerfully bestowed. His ill-humour could not have arisen from the frequent claims upon his hospitality; for he told me that he had not seen an Englishman in the valley for three years.

The descent, though on the southern side, continued on the glaciers much longer, from the summit, than the ascent. We overtook a man

just as we left the glaciers, with whom I joined company. In a quarter of an hour we had descended to firm rocks and earth, and so far too beneath the clouds which enveloped the Macugnaga pass, that the magnificent and beautiful Mont Rosa was presented in its entire extent from the Cima de Jazi to the Pic Blanc, and from its bright and loftiest peaks, to its lowest glaciers and the source of the Anza, which ran into the plain and valley of Macugnaga. The effect of this glorious scene can never be forgotten, and alone is worth a journey from England.

The descent was very fatiguing. The village in the valley of Macugnaga seemed beneath me, not more than an hour's distance; but it was four hours of difficult descent from the summit before I reached it. There are no traces of the old road on the southern side. Half-way down I obtained some milk at a *châlet*, and at Macugnaga found a tolerable inn, where my reception was very different from Saussure's, described in his *Voyages dans les Alpes*. A deformed but very civil host, who spoke French well, having, as I learnt, spent some time at Lyons as *cuisinier*, welcomed me — a fatigued and hungry traveller. His “*Voulez-vous des viandes, Monsieur?*” was the most pleasant inquiry that had been addressed to my appetite for many a day; but it was sadly deceived upon the appearance of what my civil little *Æsop* called



*côtelettes de veau*. The veal, thinner than Vauxhall ham, was buried in the *panée*; he must have studied the cuisine under L'Avare. I contrived, however, from several mysterious messes, to destroy a good appetite, and retired early to a room decorated with prints: one represented St. Joachim and St. Anna worshipping the Virgin as a child (their own) in the clouds; but there were more monstrous relics of Catholic adoration than this—bits of bone, teeth, skin, and hair, of half the saints of the calendar, were framed like butterflies. These relics, it would seem, had taken the fleas under their protection, as St. Anthony did the fishes; for I was welcomed by myriads which blackened my legs. I found, however, that the poor wretches were anti-Malthusians. The supply of food was not equal to their numbers, and they were too weak to get from the floor to the bed, which was a high one. By a little manœuvring I succeeded in avoiding the colonisation of my resting-place.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Pesterana—Professore Fantonetti—Visit to the Gold Mines—  
 Gorge of Pesterana—Ceppo Morelli—Scenery of the  
 Val Anzasca—Fine Race of Inhabitants—Costume and  
 Beauty of the Women—Vanzone—Ponte Grande—Beautiful  
 Road through the Valley—Castiglione—View into Val  
 d'Ossola—Pie de Muliera—Superintendent of the Gold  
 Mines—Situation of the ancient Ictymuli—Vogogna—In-  
 stance of Italian gratitude—Happy Valley.

*August 26th.*—The morning was beautiful. After sketching the fine view of Mont Rosa from the door of the auberge, and collecting from mine host some information for my day's journey, and a confirmation of my guide's topography in the names of the places which we had passed, we left the retired little plain of Macugnaga. The valley soon narrowed to a deep glen; the descent was rapid, and less than an hour brought us to the gold mines of Pesterana. There is an *El Dorado* sound in this, which excites high expectations; but there is no more appearance of it than in the pavement of St. Paul's Churchyard. The mines are explored to find this "world's chief mischief," combined, in very small proportions, in sulphate of iron; a kilogramme of ore yielding, by

the process of amalgamation, an average of only six grammes, the richest ore only yielding ten. My landlord at Macugnaga had furnished me with the name of Professore Fantonetti, as the superintendent of the mines, and as the possessor of a collection of specimens of the minerals of the valley.

I called upon this gentleman at Pesterana, and received the most courteous and obliging attentions from him. He sent a servant with me to the mills on the Anza, where the ore is crushed, and to the mines; and directed the miners to give me assistance and information. The first was readily offered; but the last was useless, as I could not understand a syllable of their jargon. I entered the mine about 300 yards, by an adit of slight ascent: here a shaft was sunk about 60 feet, and I saw several miners working on the lower vein of the ore. The quantity raised is not very considerable. Women are chiefly employed in pounding and picking the ore, whence it passes to the mills of granite, in which it is ground and prepared for amalgamation: the final process is in the hands of M. Fantonetti alone. On my return to that gentleman's house, he pressed me to take refreshment, and gave me some specimens of the ore of the mines, and two works which he had written: one of them on the mines of these valleys, in answer to a work of Rossini's, of Turin.

I soon after crossed the Anza, over an alpine

bridge, and continued to ascend above the right bank of the river. Numerous adits of mines, indicated by the earth and stones thrown from them, marked the pursuits of the inhabitants of this valley, who are nearly all miners. The mineral riches of these mountains—iron, lead, copper, silver, and gold—are worked at short distances from each other; and many of the mines of the inferior metals are very productive. The distinction between the continuous valleys of Pesterana and Anzasca, is strongly marked by a vast mass of the mountain, which, nearly closing the bottom of the former valley, leaves only a deep and savage gorge, through which the Anza escapes on the left side into the Val Anzasca. The path over this mass leads through what scarcely deserves the name of a village, Morgen, but which lies in a spot richly wooded by magnificent chestnut-trees. The descent into the Val Anzasca is very beautiful: the river is again crossed, over a fearful bridge, immediately below the defile of Pesterana; and the road continues on the left bank of the river, entirely through the valley. The first village in the Val Anzasca is Campiole, near Ceppo Morelli; it is the place which travellers who would avoid the valley of Macugnaga, or Pesterana, would arrive at by the path over the Mont Moro. The descent, my guide informed me, is longer than from the Macugnaga pass; but

much distance is gained by travellers who would go from the valley of Saas direct to the Val Anzasca. Here the Piemontese dialect began to prevail ; though the German patois of my guide was understood even below Vanzone.

The immediate scenery of the upper part of this beautiful valley, where from its depth the lofty mountains were hid from my view, reminded me of some of the sweetest scenes of Devonshire. But the path soon rose above the left bank of the river, and attained a considerable elevation ; and I perceived that, except in a few limited spots at the upper end of the valley, and here and there on the steep sides of the mountains, there was no land to cultivate. Extensive forests of chestnut and walnut-trees, fine in form and rich in colour, clothed the hills as far up as the eye could perceive them (except where lofty and distant mountains peered above), and descended far beneath the traveller's path, to where it met the opposite slope, scarcely appearing to leave room enough for the river to struggle through, and of which glimpses were rarely caught. This was the general character of the valley. From a chapel at Cima-morga, in the road near Ceppo Morelli, there is a very striking view : in it all the beautiful characteristics of the scenery seemed to be assembled—the river far beneath struggling through its narrow bed ; the majestic forests, which clothed the moun-

tain sides, among which was sometimes seen a village church or group of cottages; and the vista towards the Alps terminated by the vast and beautiful peaks of Mont Rosa.

I was much struck by the appearance of the inhabitants of this valley. I rarely saw a plain woman: their beautiful faces and fine forms, their look of cheerfulness and independence, and, what in Piemont was more remarkable, their extreme cleanliness, continually arrested attention. Their costume was peculiar, but pleasing: the hair braided; a vest fitted to the form, and buttoned high, over which was another, usually embroidered and left open; beneath, a silk or other cincture round the waist, and a petticoat reaching half-way down the legs: the feet generally bare; the sleeves of the chemise loose, full, and white as the snow of their mountains; with faces, hands, and feet, cleaner than those of any other peasantry that I ever saw. Sometimes I observed a loose coat, like that of the modern Greek, worn over their usual dress, as if going on a distant visit. Naked feet are rarely seen without the concomitants of filth and beggary, and among such persons a large proportion of the *gummy*; but here the feet, ancles, and legs, were models for the artist: and my admiration as a painter was demanded, in observing the elegant form and graceful appearance of one particularly beautiful

young girl, near St. Carlo, who was bearing a vessel of oil on her head to the mines. All this I suppose will appear *rodomontade* to those who are only acquainted with the ugliness, filth, and wretchedness of the general inhabitants of the valleys of Piemont; but another fact will support the claims of the Anzascans to distinguished superiority. I did not see nor hear of a *goître* or *crétin* in my day's journey of twenty-five miles through the valley—a strong confirmation of the opinions always given to my inquiries by mountaineers themselves, that the filthy habits of a people are the primary cause of *goîtres* and *crétinism*; it is thus induced in the community of those afflicted by the dreadful scourge, becomes hereditary, and can only be removed by a change of habits in two or three generations. This valley differs not in the local causes, often cited as productive of *crétinism*, from other valleys which are marked by this scourge. The waters of the Anza flow from the glaciers of Mont Rosa as those of the Doire descend from Mont Blanc, and both are drunk by the inhabitants. The proportions of labour, and burdens borne, are at least equal in the Val Anzasca; the degree of elevation and moisture is similar; and it is parallel with those valleys which are the most remarkable for this curse, the Valais and the Val d'Aosta.

The Anzascans are aware that they have a reputation for cleanliness and beauty, and they are

justly proud of it. Whilst I was taking refreshment at Vanzone, the principal town in the valley, I mentioned to the innkeeper (rather, a sort of keeper of a chandler's shop) the impression which the people of the valley had made upon me. He seemed delighted at my having noticed the fine women and their cleanliness, and said that what I had seen was not sufficient to do them justice: "Come," said he, "into our valley at a festa; see our women on Sunday next at St. Carlo, the village below there, which you see in the valley; all the world will be there: in Upper Val Sesia they boast of their women, but they are not to be compared to ours." I spoke again of their cleanliness; he said, "Our women pride themselves upon the quantity, the fineness, and, above all, the whiteness of their linen; and they are so scrupulously clean in their persons, that (I must use his own energetic expression) *il est plus facile de trouver une mouche blanche dans cette vallée qu'une vermine.*"

I had not observed any beggars in the valley; and there was no appearance of poverty: mine host said, that the great industry of the Anzascans enabled them to establish funds for their poor, which prevented their wants, and restrained their begging. Those who could not work were assisted, and those who could, were not permitted to be idle.



Soon after leaving Vanzone we passed St. Carlo, and I wished that I could have conveniently waited until the festa, and seen the promised assembly of the Anzascans. After another hour we reached Ponte Grande, a light single arch thrown across the Anza, over which a road led to Banio, and, by passes in the mountains, to the Val Sesia and Varallo. I had expected much from the scene described by Ebel, of Mont Rosa from the Ponte Grande; but it disappointed me: I had, perhaps, become fastidious. Shortly after, and near a little plain in the valley, called Valbianca, a fine waterfall presented itself. The road now became very hilly; and after leaving Calasco, a steep and long ascent led high up the side of the valley. The road was covered for miles with vines trellised over the head of the traveller, which often formed fine and picturesque foregrounds to the immense depths and rich scenes of the valley through which I had passed: Calasco, Banio, and other towns or villages, relieved the eye; and the vast and distant masses of the Pic Blanc of Mont Rosa still terminated the scene. Shortly before arriving at Castiglione the plain of Ossola opened to the view with an effect strikingly picturesque and beautiful, from our elevated situation. The vines, woods, Italian buildings—for they had now assumed that peculiar character—the deep valley beneath, the peep into the distant plain, and, be-

yond all these, the more distant mountains which divide the Val d'Ossola from the Lago Maggiore, formed an assemblage equal in picturesque charms to any that I had witnessed. Some time before we arrived at Castiglione a man had joined us, whose French was a relief to me from the silence of nearly all but gesture which my guide's patois imposed upon me. He relieved Jan by good-naturedly carrying his burthen, and was persuaded, with difficulty, to partake of some excellent wine of the valley, which we procured at Castiglione. He mentioned his intention of going to the Valteline. I picked up another companion, in a young man of respectable appearance going to Muliera; from him I received much information, as we walked together, about journeys around Mont Rosa, and intelligence of the places and objects *en route*. It was evening when we reached Cima de Muliera, whence the descent is very rapid by a zig-gag paved road to Pie de Muliera, which he kindly walked through, to put me in the right road across the valley to Vogogna. He pointed out a house in passing through Pie de Muliera, which formerly belonged to a superintendent of the gold mines, who had fantastically displayed his riches, or his occupation, by gilding the balconies, railing, and other iron-work of his residence. I think I can perceive in the Val Anzasca the location of the Ictymuli, whose gold

mines were so extensively wrought, that Pliny says a law existed among them which forbade their employing more than 5000 men. D'Anville and Cluverius place the Ictymuli at the head of the Val Sesia: it has always been a subject of difficulty with ancient geographers; but here, where, and where only in Piemont, gold is still raised, the name of the Ictymuli may be traced in the villages of Cima de *Muliera* and Pie de *Muliera*, at the entrance to the valley where the mines are worked, and where yet, at the latter place, the receiver of the metal resides. This admitted, the commercial importance of the ancient pass of the Moro may be accounted for; its antiquity, and the excellence of what remains of it, carries it back to a remote period as a line of intercourse, at least coeval with that of the Great St. Bernard.

It was nine o'clock, and I was much fatigued, when we reached the post-house at Vogogna, in the Val d'Ossola, where, though it was in the great route of the Simplon, I could not procure any thing but eggs and coffee; the last chicken and *carne* had just been devoured by two young men who were sitting in the *salle-à-manger*. One of them, observing that I was an Englishman, regretted that they had cleared the larder; he begged leave to assure me, that his father had taught him always to look upon my countrymen with respect and pleasure, and never to fail to express to them

his gratitude for the distinguished kindness with which he had been treated by them when he was in England. “ My father’s name, sir,” he said, “ was Tremezzani, and my mother was the Signora Bianca: both my parents are now dead; and I never fail in this my duty to make a declaration of my father’s grateful recollections of England and Englishmen, when an opportunity occurs.”

I discharged my cheerful, civil guide before I retired, as he wished to leave Vogogna for his native valley at an early hour to-morrow morning: we parted excellent friends, with his assurance that he was *contentissima*.

My recollection of the scenes which I have passed through in the last three days, from Visp to Vogogna, induce me to think this pass the most wild, interesting, and beautiful that I have yet made; and the Val Anzasca I have distinguished in my mind as the happy valley, not only for the blessings which its inhabitants possess, but the evils which they appear to have avoided, and which have rendered even the presence of priests unnecessary,—at least I saw none; nor did I, during my descent through the valley, from Macugnaga to Pie de Muliera, meet or see a soldier, a douanier, or a beggar—a *goître* or a *crétin*.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Intra — Jour Maigre — Lago Maggiore — Luvino — Lugano — Lake of Lugano — Porlezza — Road to Menagio — Lake of Como — Domasio — Musquittoes — Lake of Riva — Chiavenna — Isola — New Route of the Splugen — Splugen — Andeer — Via Mala — Richendau — Coire.

*August 27th.* — I engaged a char to take me to Intra, on the Lago Maggiore. Before I left the post-house, I found that my guide had ordered a supper last night, and left me to pay for it—so much for the primitive simplicity of my man of Saas. I had expected, soon after leaving Vogogna and passing the Toccia, to have repassed the river, as indicated in a route in Kellar's map, and to have skirted its left bank to the Lago Maggiore; but I was surprised at my conductor driving me on the Simplon route, beyond the magnificent bridge which crosses the Negolia, the river which flows from the beautiful Lago d'Orta, mentioned in my first excursion, until we arrived very near to Fariolo, where we turned off by a new road that has been lately finished, which leads to the passage of the Toccia, by a flying bridge, close to its confluence with the lake. A new and beautiful route on the other side of

the river skirts the lake to Sono and Palanza. My conductor turned off on the left to Intra, avoiding the *détour* of Palanza ; this short cut could scarcely be called a carriage-road. At Intra I was served with an abundant dinner; for though it was *maigre* day, and offered to a single traveller, there were *nine* different dishes of fish, and as many of cooked and raw fruits, including a bottle of excellent wine: for all this the charge was only three francs. From the inn window the scene on the lake was very beautiful. Vines trellised in front of the inn afforded shelter from the sun, to the traveller who preferred taking wine and *refreshment* beneath them; to which the breeze from the lake was a delicious aid. The beautiful forms and colours of the mountains that surround the lake, the deep tint of its waters, and the bustle of the boats and white fluttering of their sails on the surface of the lake—all formed a picture of romantic beauty.

From Intra I took a boat, and ascended the lake to Luvino, where the Austrian douaniers asked for half a franc *not* to see my baggage. I arrived there about six o'clock, too late to go to Lugano this evening. The inn was very dirty, but the landlord civil and attentive. Just as I had retired, I was roused by the firing of cannon; about thirty rounds disturbed the neighbourhood: this was the commencement of another festa in honour of the

Virgin, the priests having again ordered a day of idleness for to-morrow.

28th.—I was awoke this morning at four, by the busy idlers commencing their morning service to the Virgin with another salute of cannon. I engaged a char of my landlord, to take me to Lugano. On my leaving the narrow streets of Luvino, at five o'clock, some of the inhabitants were arranging an awning over the streets through which the image of the Madonna was to pass, and others were erecting triumphal arches of poles covered with moss, and decorated with artificial flowers. My conductor, a boy of the inn, in spite of the obstructions which this mummary produced, dashed up the steep streets and new road with such speed as almost to rob me of the beautiful scenes presented by the lake from the road above Luvino, where I compelled him to stop, however, whilst I made a sketch. Away we drove again; the poor horse was forced through the beautiful valley of Tresa, up and down, with no other remission of his speed than the restraints which I imposed from a sense of danger. This extraordinary haste, regardless alike of my neck and the horse's safety, was made, to return to the festa in time. We accomplished in three hours what is usually a journey of five: it was scarcely eight o'clock when we arrived at Lugano. Much of the road is very

beautiful, particularly near Ponte Tresa. This town has a striking Italian air, owing to its numerous arcades, between which we rattled over the small pavement. The fig, the almond, the vine, and the peach, abounded in the scenes through which we drove. The occasional peeps over the western arm of the lake of Lugano, the hills richly wooded, the churches, convents, and villages, presented views highly picturesque; and on the left, near the commencement of the descent to Lugano, the little lake of Muzano adds to the number of delightful scenes and impressions which the traveller receives in this pleasant route.

I breakfasted at the Hôtel de la Poste, in an immense *salle-à-manger*; it appeared to be a good as well as large establishment. A boat was soon ready to take me to Porlezza, at the north-eastern extremity of the lake. The voyage was delightful. The most important feature in the scenes on the lake immediately after leaving Lugano, is the mont and church of St. Salvador, the ascent to which is long and difficult; and though an annual service is performed there, I should think most of the attendants went in obedience to an order of their church as a penance. My boatman told me the mount was infested with vipers: let them dedicate it to St. Patrick. Opposite to Mont Salvador is the wine-port of the lake, Caprino, where it is kept cool in caverns; it is a favourite



resort of the wine-bibbers of Lugano. The day was beautiful: there was a spirit in the scene which charmed the feelings; and the quiet of the lake, unbroken but by the rowers' paddles, seemed as if the world's cares had never come within its precincts. The hills which spring from the lake present forms as bold as the picturesque demands, and more beautiful than imagination could paint; the mountains, though covered with verdure and forest-trees, were indented into deep and varied ravines; and the churches, and villas, and the towns,\* which decorate their sides or crown their summits, break their masses with forms and colours which relieve and gratify the eye of the observer. Vines were terraced half-way up their sides; but so arranged with the masses of wood and foliage, that art concealed art—unlike the eternal parallel lines which so effectually destroy the picturesque, and map out the sides of the hills which skirt the Rhine.

The scenery became more wild and rugged as we approached Porlezza, the banks of the lake presenting every variety of form—abrupt, precipitous, shelving, and flat. Villas and villages every where speckle its shores, and relieve the foliage of the hills with an appearance so gay amidst a scene so retired as to create the idea of a beautiful contradiction.

\* St. Mometto, Val Soldo, and others.

At Porlezza my passports were again demanded by the Austrian *dugganiers*, as a waggish friend calls them. Half a franc commanded their civility; and I proceeded on foot to Menagio, on the Lago di Como, taking with me as a guide, and to carry my baggage, the boatman, a very fine young man, who was a soldier in the Austrian service on furlough. His leave of absence was nearly expired, and he would have in three weeks to join his regiment at Vienna. We were accompanied by a man to whom he had given a passage, for his services in assisting to row; and we overtook the man going to the Valtelline whom I had met in the Val Anzasca, at Castiglione—it was a friendly recognition. The heat from twelve to two o'clock, the time occupied in our walk to Menagio, was excessive, and I never felt so severely oppressed by it. At Piano, a little village near a beautiful lake of that name, we procured some wine, but could get no *cold* water, so that it rather increased our distress than allayed it; and it was not till within a mile of Menagio that we found what we so much wanted—a fountain of icy coldness. I had often observed the carelessness of guides, who fearlessly allayed their thirst by copious draughts of the coldest water—in fact, despising all streams that were not so; but I never saw any ill effects from it: they used the caution only of never so indulging except during a journey—never when they were likely to rest for

an hour. The road to Menagio from Porlezza is excellent for carriages; though the host at Luvino told me last evening that it was not possible to pass it but on foot; and among other lies, that it was on the edge of precipices fearfully hanging over the lake. I have not travelled any where in Switzerland over a better road. A mile before we arrived at Menagio we met several young fellows, who pressed me to agree with them for a boat to Riva; but I was rather too old a traveller for the trick: in spite of their officiously relieving my guide of some baggage, and other decoys, I was obstinate in confining my offers to one half of what they asked; and it was only when we were entering Menagio, that they agreed to what I learnt they could not fulfil of themselves, but sought boatmen to bargain for my conveyance at a price which would leave them a profit. I then refused their services. Their next object was to procure bribes from the innkeeper to detain me for the night, by preventing my getting a boat; but I had, luckily, a friend in the man who had accompanied us from Lugano; he was anxious to get to his home at Cremia, a village on the borders of the lake, and he had therefore an interest in defeating the rascals.

I soon procured a boat, took in my stores, and embarked for Riva. My friend was put on shore at Cremia; and at six o'clock I arrived at Do-

masio, which my men insisted upon putting into, and wished me to stay there for the night, or, at all events, to procure another boat and boatmen to navigate the shallows which connect the lake of Como to that of Riva. They told me that any attempt to sleep at Riva would be fatal;—that all travellers, to avoid the malaria, rested at Domasio, or proceeded to Chiavenna, which it was now too late for me to do: I was determined; and finding me so, they got another light boat ready, into which I was soon transferred; and the skill and caution displayed by my new associates, convinced me that my boatmen from Menagio had acted prudently. The current sets strong into the lake of Como, and the channel is so shallow, that even with my experienced men we were once aground. The slow mixture of the waters presented a curious appearance: the yellow turbid water of the Riva flowed for a considerable way into the lake of Como, with a line as distinctly marked as different liquors in a chemist's shew-bottle; and two inches on either side of the line a phial might have been filled with foul or clear water. Myriads of musquittoes annoyed us. I wrapped myself well in my cloak, and when passing the flats between the lakes, wore my gauze mask for protection: these insects disappeared after we got into deep water. We proceeded through a scene of sterility; the bare rocks, rising perpen-

dicularly from the lake, appeared fearfully to hang over us to a terrific height; and this effect was increased by the darkness and obscurity of evening, which had now overtaken us. The rising moon made the eastern side of the lake take a deeper hue, whilst her faint light gave a visionary appearance to the wild rocks which overhung our approach to Riva; and the evening's silence was only broken by the occasional hum of a musquitto. It was nine o'clock before we arrived at Riva; the boatmen advised me not to attempt to remain there, and offered to take my portmanteau and walk on twelve miles with me, to Chiavenna. The night was beautiful. I loaded my guides, and after a long and fatiguing day's journey, I found myself welcomed, at twelve o'clock, by the civil landlord of the Poste, who, though knocked up, procured me refreshment, and shewed me to a clean and excellent bed and chamber.

29th.—Mine host of the *Post Haus* was very obliging. I had arisen too late to see some English travellers who had slept there on their way to the lake. A look is probably all that would have been exchanged. My courtesies were generally ready for my countrymen; but I had seen so much of their unconquerable sheepishness and restraining pride, that I seldom began a conversation with an Englishman unless invited to it by

an expression which said, it will be courteously received. Mine host walked out with me as cicerone; he was communicative and obliging, and went with me over what had once been a cloister, but its cells were now employed as depôts of wine, corn, &c.: his object in taking me there was to shew me a picture,—for he dabbled in the fine arts, and sometimes caught a gull, to whom he sold a picture whose only recommendation was the name of a school or master, which, boldly asserted, was a bait not to be resisted by some of my countrymen who would be thought, with “*Sir Visto*,” to have a taste. This convent was purchased by the post-master when these worse than useless establishments were suppressed by the French during their occupation of Chiavenna. My cicerone is thought a rich man, and consequently an important one. There are some large caverns in the rocks near the city, which are extremely cold: in these the famous wine is kept which is brought from the Valtelline, and of which large quantities are now sent into the Grisons, since the completion of the route of the Splügen.

The voiture which had brought my countrymen from Coire to Chiavenna, I engaged, through the agency of the postmaster, to take me across the Splügen on his return, and I agreed to pay him two French crowns (twelve francs) a-day whilst I employed him: it was a roomy excellent

carriage, with two good horses. My conductor spoke only German and Romanche, except a few words of Italian, which became my only means of communication with him. We left Chiavenna about nine o'clock, and ascended by an excellent road the valley, or rather gorge, of St. Giacomo. From Chiavenna to St. Maria the road lies in this narrow valley, which is strewn with rocks, through which the torrent of the Lira struggles, that descends from the south side of the Splügen. Wherever a little soil is found, the chestnut and walnut-trees grow luxuriantly; and not an inch of ground which can be effected by the plough or the spade, is neglected. The tower of St. Maria is a striking object in its wild locality, as the eye turns back on the valley and regards the entrance to the Val Bregaglia. Well-constructed tourniquets in the road enabled us to ascend rapidly; and I found myself at the entrance of the Campo Dolcino much earlier than I expected. The name promises much more than the scene realises; for the Campo Dolcino is a little unpicturesque plain, about a mile in length, surrounded by lofty mountains. After passing through it, the road enters a defile, in which the most striking feature is a waterfall of nearly 300 feet in height, which appears to fall from the heavens, as the sky is intercepted by the top of the fall, where its bright edge reflects so much light that the line of separation

is with so much difficulty distinguished, that they appear to be united : the dark rocks on either side near their bases are well wooded, and present altogether a striking scene. Thence the road shortly opens upon the rising plain of Isola ; and the mountain-road, by the old pass of the Cardinals, is abruptly presented. The new road turns off half a mile before Isola, and ascends on the right : and to those who travel post or rest at Campo Dolcino, Isola is altogether avoided ; but we went there to refresh the horses and ourselves. I was provided with an excellent dinner, and with the dessert a delicious preparation of curds, known by the name of *sega*. From the window of the inn at Isola, the new road could be seen winding to a vast height above the valley. The newly-constructed galleries were distinctly seen ; some had been insecurely built, and the labourers were employed in repairing them, and blasting the rocks for the widening of other parts of the road. Whilst I waited the preparation of my dinner, at one o'clock I heard a drum beaten in the mountains, which my host told me was the signal to the men to guard against the explosions, which took place every day at that hour. In a few moments the thunder of the mines reverberated through the valley, and the rocks blown out and rolling down the mountain sides, produced, from where I was securely placed, a fine effect. Isola was the last village on the road



when the pass was by the Cardinels. Now the landlord's occupation, as well as that of the villagers, who acted as guides, must be almost gone. The old road was exceedingly dangerous in the spring; but at other times, though always fatiguing, its appalling terrors were only to be found in the books of travellers.

From Isola we returned to the new road, and began its ascent; it is steeper than that of the Simplon generally, and all the turns are so abrupt, that a carriage descending rapidly would, without great caution on the part of the postilion, be thrown over in winding round the tourniquets: there were not fewer, I think, than thirty turnings in the zig-zag ascent. My conductor was very anxious to learn if I had a stiletto with me; because, he said, if it were seen by the Austrian *préposé* on the summit at their station, I should be sent in chains to Milan or Venice. I told him that the English never travelled with stilettos, but were usually armed with pistols. "Ah! had I pistols?" "Yes." "They were worse than stilettos. Were they large?" "No." "Worse still; if they had been large and difficult to conceal, they might have passed as a necessary protection to a traveller; but small pistols, such as mine, which increased his terror on inspection, as they had percussion-locks, to him a secret contrivance, would lead me into certain difficulty if

they were seen. An Italian nobleman, he said, had been sent back from the Splugen to Venice handcuffed, because a stiletto (secret arms) had been found upon him. I laughed at his fears, and had cause to do so, as I was neither subjected to inquiry nor search at the custom-house.

An ascent of an hour brought us to that part of the road where the rocks had been blasted, and it had since required the active exertions of nearly a hundred men, women, and children employed there, to remove enough of the rocks and stones blown out, to make a passage for the carriage, and in some places we were detained. The works were of various character to protect the traveller against avalanches in dangerous parts: in some, excavations had been made in the solid rock, others were covered ways built of strong masonry; and some had on the lower side of the road, walls and pillars of masonry, from the tops of which rafters were placed sloping upwards to the rocks or steep banks: on the high side of the road these are covered with fir plank, making an inclined roof, over which the winter avalanche can slide into the abyss below, and leave the traveller in shelter and security beneath its protection. Antonio Talachini, of Milan, was the *apaltatore* or engineer-in-chief for the route of the Splugen, and Donneganna his assistant.

The scene from near the last of these covered

ways on the ascent, at the “Casa di recovero da Tagiate,” is very extraordinary, from the vast depth of the valley, and the appearance of the road which conducts to it, as it is seen stretching its white and zig-zag line, like the track of some enormous serpent, down the mountain’s side; and it is further traced at the end of the plain of Isola, and among the mountain bases beyond it, even to the little plain of Campo Dolcino. From the sides of the surrounding mountains, torrents, like white threads, were seen to pour their streams into the valley below. Above Tagiate the road assumes a more savage aspect. Mont Splugen rises before it, covered with its eternal glaciers; and the greatest elevation of the pass seems here to be attained: it turns rather abruptly round to the left, and enters upon a plain which bears every character of an ancient lake: through this a gradual descent conducts to the station of the Austrians, at the frontier of their new state of Chiavenna. Here numerous carts and wagons, laden with cotton, &c. going to Switzerland, and fir planks brought over from the pine-forests in the Grisons, on the way to Milan, were waiting the necessary passports and authorities. I met more than 200 such wagons this day, chiefly drawn by bullocks. The obvious commercial importance of this route created surprise that it was so long impracticable to this mode of conveyance. The

situation of the custom-house was well chosen, as, though the elevation is very great, it is yet surrounded by mountains, and in every way sheltered. The douaniers were so obliging, that it was not even necessary to get out of the carriage. A small coin given to the officer who took and brought my passport, secured his civility.

From the custom-house to the summit was about half an hour. Near this was another casa di recovero; and at the greatest elevation a circle is formed in the road, where seats and a memento of the construction of this route are placed. From this spot the Swiss side of the mountain is seen extending far and deep into the pine-forests; and the road, after numerous windings, again reaches the woods, whence, in a short time, it opens upon the valley of the Hinter-Rhin and the village of Splugen. To enter this town a covered bridge over the Rhine is traversed, and a very good inn offered its welcome to us; but I had determined, as we had still three hours of light before us, to refresh a little, and proceed to Andeer. The inn was a large establishment, where groceries, ironmongery, mercery, and drapery, as well as wines, were to be had. Mine host was also the land-ammann and post-master, &c. We procured good wine, which we immediately drank; and I took on a delicious bottle of Cyprus with us.

We descended by the banks of the Rhine, and

crossed it as we entered the glen of Rofla, which I fancied was the Via Mala, and under this impression was disappointed, though the route was wild and fine, lying through a glen in which were some remains of iron-works. Here vast pines were accumulated, brought down by a slide from a height far above us, the slide being two miles long : it is from this place that the supplies of building-timber are now chiefly obtained for Milan, with which we saw the wagons laden on the mountain. The Rhine is a foaming torrent through this glen, forming some fine cataracts, seen through the large trunks of old and broken pines. The descent to Andeer, in the valley of Schams, from the village of Splugen, 1500 feet nearer to the level of the sea, occupied nearly three hours. At Andeer I was welcomed at an excellent inn, the Golden Crown, where good refreshment and a comfortable bed promised to prepare me well for the continuance of my journey.

30th.—The clouds hung low and heavy in the valley of Schams, and obscured the surrounding scenery : this is an accident to which the Alpine traveller is very liable, and it is fortunate for him if he be detained in a place where he may visit churches, collections, or public works of interest, and his language be understood. Here the tedium of a six hours' detention was scarcely relieved by a visit to the small unpretending Protestant church

of Andeer. The people are of the reformed religion, and their language *Romanche*. On my descent from the church I was addressed in English by a gentleman, whose commercial intercourse with us, during the prohibition of English goods on the continent by Buonaparte, when the agency of the Swiss was as profitable as it was dangerous, had given him a familiar acquaintance with our language; I found him intelligent, communicative, and encouraging, for he gave me the hope of the weather clearing in a few hours, and my proceeding to Coire to-day. We walked together to the old warm baths of Andeer or Pigneurbad—now deserted and decaying. He related to me some extraordinary tales of bear-hunts. These furnish some of the brightest opportunities for displays of heroism among the mountaineers of these districts: from him, too, I learned something of the recent undertakings of the canton of the Grisons, in the construction of the road over the Bernardin, and that which they also contemplate of the passage by the Julian Alps. The weather cleared up about twelve o'clock, when I started, taking with me my new friend as far as Tüsis. We passed through Zillis or Schams, and shortly entered the tremendous defile of the *Via Mala*. A safe and well-constructed road conducts through this narrow glen, where the rocks and mountains rise to a vast height above the traveller's

head. Sometimes forests of pines, which spring out of the face of the rock, scarcely lessen its savage aspect, as some of them, scathed and broken, hang fearfully over, or entangle with the trunks and roots of others. Three well-constructed stone bridges, thrown across a horrid gulf, hardly afford to the passenger a sense of security. Some glimpses only are caught of the struggling torrent, which from the parapet of the first bridge appears foaming through its tortuous bed, apparently, from its violent eddies, against the direction of the stream. A stone dropped from the parapet sunk above 200 feet before it touched the water. Large trunks of trees brought down by the torrents hung in crevices and on ledges of the rocks below, and added greatly to the wild horror of the fearful depth.

At the end of the defile, where it opens into the vale of Domleschg, the castle of Rhaalta, or Alba Rhetia, said to be the oldest in the Grisons, towers on the perpendicular rock of Johannenstein 640 feet above the bed of the Rhine, and commands the entrance to the defile, nearly opposite to where a road is cut through the rock, at a place called the Verlohren Loch ; it is a bad specimen of engineering. They began to pierce it at both ends, and it cannot be said that they met in the middle, it is so crooked ; yet its length is not above a hundred paces. In this part of the gorge the strug-

gling torrent can scarcely be heard, and not at all seen below ; and of the vast pines which grow out of the rocky fissures half-way down, the tops do not reach the parapet of the road. A few years ago, the pines on the other side of the gorge took fire, and the heat was so excessive that travellers could not pass on the road opposite for several days. Just beneath the old castle I parted with my companion, who crossed the river on a light bridge, to ascend the valley of the Albula, whilst I proceeded through Tüsis, crossing by a bridge the black waters of the Nolla. The rain which occasionally fell annoyed me less than it would otherwise have done, because I was aware of the necessity of my returning to the village of Splügen, on my way to the Bernardino, and therefore that this day's scenery would be revisited. I passed through the rich valley of Domleschg to Retzuns and Reichenau ; where the Vorder Rhine is crossed by a wooden covered bridge before the traveller enters the village. We rested here to refresh the horses, and I entered the gardens of the landammann, who is a large proprietor in this canton. These pleasant gardens project between the two bridges towards the confluence, and are delightfully situated, but there is a finnikin and Cockney air about their laying out which one could not have expected so far from Pentonville. In leaving Reichenau we crossed a wooden and covered bridge, of a single



immense arch, one of the finest structures of this class in the Grisons ; thence the road turns off abruptly towards Coire ; continuing on the right bank of the Rhine, it passes through Ems, where the Mont Galenda appears, a grand object. The valley widens into a plain ; and seated deep on the right, at the base of some lofty mountains, Coire, the capital of the Grisons, is finely situated. I was received with much civility, chez Carlo Denz, at the Steinbroc. After a *table-d'hôte* supper with some ex-military, I made arrangements for the refitting of my wardrobe during the time which I propose making an excursion to the lake of Wallenstadt.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Ragatz—Sargans—Lake of Wallenstadt—Fall of the Sarenbach—Innkeeper—Vale of Seetz—Baths of Pfeffers—Visit to the Spring—Road to the Convent of Pfeffers—Coire—Voiturier—Via Mala—Andeer—Valley of Schams—Rofla—Splugen—Rhinwald—Naufanen—A Family of Giants.

*August 31st.*—I started early with the same voiturier, Jacob Rugg, who had brought me from Chiavenna. Our route, the high road to the lake of Constance, lay through a fertile valley. After crossing the river which issues from the vale of Prettigau, we left the main road, and crossed the Rhine to Ragatz: the valley here is beautiful, and the approach to Ragatz highly picturesque; on the left the convent of Pfeffers is seen among some rude mountain masses, many of them crowned with *ruins* of feudal castles—objects of as much pleasure to the philanthropist as the painter. The Rhine flows at the foot of a vast mountain, the Falkniss, which it separates from the Schollberg, whose grand form enriches the scene, as it rises in great magnificence above Sargans. The valley through which the Rhine flows is only sepa-

rated from the valley of the Seetz, or of Sargans, by an elevation of about twenty feet, which, acting as an embankment, prevents the Rhine from taking a shorter cut by the lake of Wallenstadt, instead of flowing on to the lake of Constance. The views westerly, from near Ragatz, are bounded by the distant and lofty mountains which surround the lake of Wallenstadt. The whole ride from Coire to the lake is beautiful and full of interest. We arrived early, three o'clock, at Wallenstadt, and put up at the post-house, the Auberge de la Cerf. I immediately made arrangements for an excursion on the lake, of which I had had some peeps on my approach to Wallenstadt. A boat was soon ready, and I was rowed up the northern side of the lake to the little commune of St. Quentin, the only spot amidst the precipices of its northern banks where there is space for a village; here we landed, and gathered some plums, which grew in immense quantities in the orchards. We continued on the same side of the lake, and visited the falls which have given a certain celebrity to these scenes. That of the Sarenbach descends from a height so vast, 1600 feet, that it is soon dispersed in mist, and only the white foaming line at its summit can be seen from the bottom of the gorge into which the fall descends, and where the dispersed waters again accumulate, and the re-formed stream rushes past the observer into the

lake; but even in the winter and spring, when the quantity of water is the greatest, it is so disproportioned to the vastness of the surrounding objects, that it adds no more sublimity to the scene than the squirt of a fire-engine does to the *effect* of a fire.

All the guide-books assert that the rocks which form the bases of the Mont Ammon descend from their vast height perpendicularly to the lake. This is not true. The border of the lake where these towering masses are highest is half a mile, from a base perpendicular to the summit; and it is only from the opposite side of the lake that their height forcibly impresses the spectator. I confess that this lake, of which I had heard so much, disappointed me; and half the reports given of the dangers of its navigation are raised by the boatmen, to increase the value of their services. The winds are not so variable on the lake as they are reported to be: the frail barks used there would be dangerous any where; and strangers ought not to pay for escaping the risk which those whom they employ might avoid.

After enjoying a splendid sunset on the lake, at eight o'clock we returned to Wallenstadt, where my supper and bed were heartily welcomed, though the latter, from its littleness, was uncomfortable, and the coverlids so small, that I sought to remedy this evil by taking two, one from off another bed.

*Sept. 1st.*—There is something amusing in the republican importance of the titles of which mine host could boast : Estace Franz Jacob Huber, aubergiste of the Cerf, was kreisamtmann, post-master, préfet of all the valleys of Wallenstadt, judge of the peace, counsellor of the state of St. Gallen, and president of tribunal in première instance. He bears the character of a worthy man, and in this country he certainly was a great one. I have generally observed, that innkeepers are amongst the most reputable people in Switzerland, and hold the highest civil appointments. Nothing is more common than to find that your landlord is landammann.

The person who waited upon me at supper was an officer who had been in the service of Sardinia, but obliged to fly from his country for political offences. He appeared to be a gentlemanly, clever man, whose hard fate drove him to this place of refuge, where he was treated with the kindness of friendship : he attends the guests of the master, to make himself useful. He had hopes of a recall from the new sovereign of Sardinia.

We returned by the vale of Seetz, and saw, in the direction opposite to my advance to Wallenstadt, new beauties in the scenery. The château of Flums on the right, and the castellated rocks on our left—the rich valley beyond, and the grand mountains in the distance, presented a magnificent

scene. The old castle of Sargans, under the Schollberg, is a finely situated object. We returned to Ragatz, where I was disgusted with the *taste* and devotion with which a crucifix was painted *green*, with spots of *red* upon it to represent blood. Robinson Crusoe's Muscovite idol could not have been more hideous; yet this was an object of worship in a Christian country! We left the carriage at Ragatz, and walked to the baths at Pfeffers. The ascent lay through a forest bordering a deep glen: the heat was oppressive, and it was two hours before we left the wood, and entered some fields which we crossed. After passing a torrent, we rested in a small chapel, whence we saw the convent of Pfeffers: the high grounds around it prevented our looking into the valley of Ragatz; but the Falkniss, which bounded the valley on the other side of the Rhine, presented a background rich in tint, and very grand in form.

Soon after, we advanced towards a hollow, in which it would have been impossible to have guessed that there existed a deep and savage gorge, the channel of the Tamina; into it, however, we rapidly descended by a zig-zag path, and saw on the opposite side the face of a perpendicular rock, below which, at a depth of above 600 feet, we observed the top of a roof, which covered the conventual baths of Pfeffers; a steep path led us down to them. Before reaching the baths, we met many

invalids, resting on seats conveniently placed on the side of this extraordinary ravine. We at length arrived at the building, and entered what, from its form, would seem to be the corridor of a convent, but which, in its adaptation, was rather a bazaar. Linens, silks, caps, hats, pipes, cutlery, boxes, ribands, toys, &c., were arranged on stalls, and a sort of "What d'ye buy?" invitation was made by every master or mistress of a stall. As I learnt that the table-d'hôte was [to be ready at twelve o'clock, I took my place there: it was well-occupied and well-supplied. In this monkish establishment women alone served. The abbot presided, and eight or ten brethren from the convent attended. A few ladies were present; and among the invalids was a Prussian minister. My left-hand neighbour took a lesson in English, and the whole thing passed off pleasantly.

After dinner, I went to visit the hot spring at its source. A young German offered to accompany me with the guide, who questioned my ability to bear with a steady head a dangerous passage; I assured him of my self-confidence, and we proceeded. Having descended, and passed through the pump-room, we went out on a wooden bridge, which crossed the Tamina foaming beneath our feet, whilst above us, at a height of 625 feet, a shed was projected over the face of the rock, whence provisions, &c. were lowered to the baths,

the rock being so perpendicular that every thing was conveyed without touching until it reached the convent below. After crossing the bridge, we entered the dark rift of the rock, walking usually on two planks, but in some places on *one* only, fixed on cramps driven into the side of the rock—no rail, no protection but in sure feet and a steady head: here and there it was necessary to stoop to avoid the rock, which leaned acutely towards that on the other side of the torrent, and at one place the sides met at the height of 200 feet above our heads, whilst the river rushed foaming nearly 100 feet below us, ready to finish, to a certainty, the accident of a slip. We thus proceeded between 600 and 700 feet into the gorge, which became darker as we advanced, until the rocks above us excluded the day. For a considerable part of the way, our only light was that which occasional breaks in the roof of this enormous vault afforded, and through which we saw forest trees of great magnitude growing above us, parts of their large roots hanging through the openings. My guide and our young German companion, as I saw them moving along the planks at a little distance, and in this “darkness visible,” presented a wild and mysterious appearance, that was perfectly awful in our extraordinary situation. Near the warm spring the cavern became lighter; those who visit it usually climb up to the source over a rock of loose slate. In



this there is no danger. The temperature of the water is here 100° of Fahrenheit. It is stated by some travellers, that the planks are often dangerous from being slippery. I certainly did not find it so, as my boots rather adhered to the damp wood. Fatal accidents have sometimes happened, when the advice of the guide has been disregarded. A few years since, three Germans kept so close together, that their weight was thrown at the same time upon one plank, which broke, and they were precipitated into the dreadful torrent of the Tamina beneath them. Their bodies were not found till long after, and one of these in the bed of the Rhine under the Falkniss.

The trunk or wooden channel which conveys the water to the baths is cramped firmly to the wall a little above the path of planks. On getting out of the cavern, I felt grateful for my safety, and gratified by the accomplishment of this interesting visit to the springs. It is one of the very few spots that I have seen where no disappointment can arise from previous description.

There are now accommodations for 300 persons at these baths: they belong to a rich convent of Benedictine monks, who propose still to enlarge the establishment. Their convent is at Pfeffers.

To vary our route back to the valley of the Rhine, when we left the baths, we ascended a different road, and crossed by a steep and wild path

over the very rocks which, when we were in the caverns, were over our heads; and we now found that the roof of our late ceiling was the bottom of a deep and savage ravine, well wooded with forest trees of great girth. We continued to ascend, or rather climb, by some hundreds of steps rudely constructed; these at last brought us to the top of the cliff, over which the shed was projected that served to lower necessities to the baths; hence it was near two miles to the village and convent of Pfeffers. A road on the right of the convent led to Ragatz. My conductor hastened on to bring the carriage, whilst I enjoyed the scene, and sketched the beautiful valley from the woods through which I descended to the road; the carriage soon arrived, and we returned to Coire. On our way, I stopped to obtain some refreshment at Trimmis, where the landlord addressed me in very good English, which he had acquired during a residence as a nobleman's servant in England.

2*d.* — My voiturier, Jacob Rugg, turned out no better than a rascal. He had agreed to take me from Chiavenna for twelve francs a-day, to go where I pleased, and keep him as long as I liked. When we returned yesterday from Wallenstadt, to keep accounts short, I paid him for four days' service, and gave him six francs extra; he expressed himself obliged. I told him to be with me at six this morning to go to Bellinzona, by the

St. Bernardin; he came without his voiture, to demand that I should pay him back again to Coire. I thought if I paid him back for any distance greater than two days, I should be placing him in a more favourable situation than I had found him; and this, at least, he was not entitled to. After some manœuvring to take advantage of my not being able readily to procure other means of returning to Splugen, and finding me resolved to walk rather than submit to imposition, he came back to offer better terms. I succeeded, however, in getting a char to take me to Andeer for fourteen francs. Jacob, finding himself a loser by his tricks, offered to go for his old terms, then for half, rather than I should take the conveyance of a rival; but I had the pleasure of leaving him at the inn-door, an object of derision to his townsmen.

My new conductor drove with great spirit: we rested a short time at Reichenau. The weather was splendid, and the beautiful vale of Domleschg, with a clear and bright view of the mountains which surround it, speckled with the ruins of old castles, richly deserved a revisit. In returning through the Via Mala, the burnt trunks of the pines marked the spot where the fire had taken place during the formation of the road, and the heat of which had, for a time, rendered it impassable. The impossibility of turning round to observe every point left in the scenes through which the tra-

veller passes, especially in such a defile as that of the Via Mala, renders them, when the journey is made in a contrary direction, new and striking. I repassed this extraordinary road with as much pleasure and surprise as I felt in my first visit.

The Via Mala is a road made on the sides of a deep ravine, formed by the bases of two mountains, which spring 6000, and even 8000 feet, from the torrent of the Hinter-Rhin, which divides them. Its entire length is about four miles from the Verlohren loch to the valley of Schams.

It would appear that the name of the Verlohren loch was formerly applied to the whole length of the ravine ; but after the first construction of the road, which took place in 1470, that portion through which it passed bore the appropriate name of the Via Mala, and the impassable part only retained the name which it still bears. At a remote period, the communication between Tüsis and Splügen lay over the mountain of the Piz Beveren, on the left bank of the Rhine, and descended upon Suvers in the Rhinwald—thus avoiding, by a considerable *détour*, the Via Mala ; but in 1470, some improvements were made, by descending into the upper part of the Via Mala at Rongella ; and this road was further improved in 1738, by changing part of its course to the other side of the ravine, and constructing two bridges, which were boldly thrown across this frightful gulf.

When the establishment of a carriage-road by the St. Bernardin was decided upon by the state of the Grisons, Pocobelli, the engineer, particularly directed his attention to the entrance of the Via Mala, at the Verlohren loch on the side of Tuisis, and determined to carry the road through the obstacles that opposed him there, as he considered that it would shorten the route, as well as be less expensive, than to repair and improve the road by Rongella. The success of his enterprise was complete : a well-made carriage-road is now extended across the river Nolla, near its confluence with the Hinter-Rhin, by a new bridge ; thence it is carried round the eastern side of the ravine to where a projecting and perpendicular rock overhangs the torrent ; through this he has cut a gallery 216 feet long, 14 feet high, and 18 feet wide. The scene immediately around this spot is very grand : the rocks towering above the road, and sinking far into the abyss below, appal the observer. The width of the gulf no where appears to exceed 150 feet. Vast pines jut out of the rock into this gorge, and flourish where it is difficult to conceive that the roots can either attach themselves or derive nourishment.

The old castle of Rhaalta\* is said to have derived its name from Rhætius, a Tuscan chief, who was driven from Italy by the Gauls 587 years before the Christian era, six centuries before the conquest

\* See page 282.

of this country by the Romans. In the fifth century it fell into the hands of the Allemanni, and then, successively, to the Goths and the Franks. Close to the ruins of the castle are those also of a church dedicated to St. John, which was built when Christianity was first introduced into the Grisons. The view from the summit of the rock, over the vale of Domleschg, is said to be very fine.

In many parts of the Via Mala, where the road is 300 or 400 feet above the torrent, the sides of the ravine are not fifty feet apart. Such spots have been chosen for the construction of the bridges by which the gorge is traversed, the road having been carried on one side or the other, as it was found practicable and convenient; but it requires a steady head to look down from the parapets of the bridges into the gulf below. The southern escape from these extraordinary scenes is into the tranquil little valley of Schams, which, by contrast with the horrors of the Via Mala, seems to be beautiful. About a league from the Via Mala, near the baths of Pignou, a bridge crosses the torrent: an inscription upon it records the completion of the new route:

JAM VIA PATET  
HOSTIBUS ET AMICIS  
CAVETE RHAETI!  
SIMPLICITAS MORUM  
ET UNIO  
SERVABUNT AVITAM  
LIBERTATEM.

Beneath the inscription is the symbol of William Tell—an apple pierced by an arrow.

Near the upper extremity of the little valley of Schams, I reached Andeer, and was welcomed at the Golden Crown by the young postmaster, Jacques Faar, with whom I had been much pleased on my way to Coire.

After partaking of his good cheer, and having agreed with mine host for a char and his services to take me to Bellinzona, by the St. Bernardin, for fifty francs, we parted from Andeer, and soon after from the valley of Schams. Leaving the old castle of Bärenburg on the right, we ascended by a zig-zag route to the gorge of Rofla, through which the Rhine thunders amidst the rocks which check its descent. The road crosses the end of the Val Ferrara by a bridge, over a magnificent cataract of the Aversa, at the confluence of this river with the Hinter-Rhin. Throughout its course in the defile of Rofla, the Rhine forms a succession of falls amidst scenes of the wildest and most savage character. The height of the principal fall is not considerable; but the volume of water rushing out from among scathed rocks of gneiss and porphyry, and a ravine darkened by the roots and trunks of vast pines, offers a scene of impressive grandeur. In the gorge there are several saw-mills, where the trees that are felled in the forests which clothe the mountains

above, are cut into planks. These trees are brought down by the slide, mentioned in my journey to Coire.\* This gorge is left by a gallery of about twenty paces in length, which opens into the Rhinwald. The village of Suvers, which lies in the old route, is seen across the valley on the right. Soon after, the road traverses the river, and continues on the left bank of the Hinter-Rhin. We only rested at the village of Splugen whilst I sketched the covered bridge over the river which leads to the pass of the Splugen.

We now continued to ascend the left bank of the Rhine, and our route as far as Naufanen, where we rested, had little variety : the ascent was very gradual ; the valley, for its elevation, broad : barley was much cultivated. There was a quiet character in the scenes of the upper valley not varied enough for beauty, nor savage enough for the sublime.

The care with which the forests of the Rhinwald, above Splugen, are preserved, is strongly contrasted with their destruction around the valley of Schams. In many parts of the Grisons they consider, that with the removal of the forests the winters have become more severe, and vegetation is checked where it used to flourish.

We rested at the little village of Naufanen.

\* See page 280.



My guide, the postmaster, hinted, before our arrival, that he was in love with one of the daughters of the house where he intended to take me to rest for the night. The alacrity with which he left his home to accompany me was now accounted for. He had looked *high* in his love; for the lady he introduced me to was a young giantess, whilst he was below the average magnitude of man: she was the first of the family who came out to welcome him, knowing, probably, the chariot-wheels of her lover. I was never more surprised than at the appearance of mine host and his children, by whom, as a stranger, I was cordially received. The father, a very fine man, about fifty, a most respectable farmer, and landammann of the district, was nearly seven feet high, his wife was above six feet, and of seven or eight children, sons and daughters—the former were all above six feet six, and the girls above six feet. I never saw such a family. As the father was considered one of the most wealthy and influential men in the Rhinwald, the young postmaster has hitherto not ventured to tell his tale to the landammann, fearing that “the stream of true love never *will* run smooth;” but he said he was determined to break his mind to him on his return from Bellinzona.

After being exceedingly well entertained, I retired; and, from the window of my chamber,

looked down the valley towards the glaciers which cover the mountains east of the Splugen; nothing could be more beautiful and tranquil than the scene. The bright full moon beamed her pale light over the mountains, giving to the glaciers a delicate brilliancy, and to the mist in the valley a gray and softened tone, as it subsided into depth and darkness.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Hinter-Rhin — Ascent to the Pass of the St. Bernardin — Summit — Policy of the Grisons — Expense and Advantages of the New Road — Opposition of the Austrian Government — Village and Baths of St. Bernardin — Falls of the Moësa — Misocco — Castle of Misocco — Fall of Buffalora — Val Misocco — Val Levantine — Bellinzona.

*Sept. 3d.* — My guide, the postmaster, was up before any one was stirring except his lady-love. After a hasty cup of coffee, an early departure took us, in the fresh of the morning, up the valley to the village of Hinter-Rhin. Near to it we crossed the river, and ascended by the new road of the Grisons which leads to Bellinzona by the St. Bernardin. Before ascending the tourniquets of the road, we looked up the valley and saw the glaciers which are the southern source of the Rhine, and the ravines through which its course lies before it reaches the little spread-out and sterile valley below Hinter-Rhin.

The turns of the new road winding up the col of the St. Bernardin, on the ridge which divides the Moschel from the Schwarzhorn, were rather abrupt and numerous before the summit was at-

tained, and not free from the danger of avalanches; for, in the month of March in last year, the diligence from Coire to Bellinzona was nearly destroyed by one. The passengers were walking when the alarm was given, and two were swept off in its course; one of them was the landammann of Roveredo, in the Val Misocco.

The road ascends between lofty mountains to a plain on the summit, where there is a lake, the source of the Moësa. An inn, established there as a house of refuge, is near its borders. The scene around is wretchedly dreary. The elevation of the col above the valley of the Hinter-Rhin is nearly 2000 English feet, and above the level of the sea about 7100. The sound judgment and liberal policy which enabled the government of the canton of the Grisons to foresee the utility and incur the expense of undertaking the construction of this new road over the St. Bernardin, cannot be too highly praised: commercial and social advantages were the only considerations. Their country was to be benefitted; and, instead of the miserable policy pursued by Sardinia, under the cunning suggestions of Austria, not to allow good roads to be constructed lest they should facilitate invasion, the people of the Grisons wisely looked at the immediate benefit to the community rather than to the remote evil of military inroad, which always has its remedy in the facility

with which such roads may be destroyed and rendered impassable : the labour of a few days will destroy what it required years to construct.

Before the completion of the Simplon and the Cenis, the only roads practicable across the Alps for carriages were those of the Brenner and the Tende—passes which are situated almost at the extremities of the great chain, and formed merely to open a more free communication between states and provinces subject to the same government. Now, however, national jealousies have been removed, and a more enlightened policy has extended commercial intercourse, mule-paths have been superseded by carriage-roads ; and, where it has not been inconsistent with their political views, even the governments of Austria, Sardinia, and Switzerland, have not only carefully preserved the routes in the great lines of communication which were made by Napoleon, for military or commercial purposes, but they have made other roads on the frontiers across the Alps. In liberal policy no state has displayed more energy than that of the Grisons. The completion of the route of the St. Bernardin, and the improvements contemplated on the Julier, are honourable evidence of its enterprise and perseverance, in defiance of the intrigues and interruptions of the Austrian government

The authorities of the canton of the Grisons, in the year 1816, turned their attention to the

formation of a road, practicable for carriages, across the mountain of the St. Bernardin. It held out the prospect of enriching their state by the transit of merchandise from the Mediterranean; to Switzerland, to Germany, and, by the Rhine, to Holland; and as their canton extended to both sides of the Alps, from the Rhinwald to the valley of Misocco, they possessed great facilities for its accomplishment. The money, however, required for this undertaking greatly exceeded the means of the canton; a company, therefore, was formed for raising it by shares, and contributions were also received towards the attainment of this object. The people of the canton who lived on the line of the projected road, advanced 60,000 Swiss francs; and the King of Sardinia, in whom the project found a ready advocate, by a convention made in 1813 with the government of the Grisons, contributed 280,000 francs, which was afterwards extended to 395,000; and further agreed to allow the annual transit, free of duty, of 30,000 quintals of grain and rice from Sardinia into the Grisons; he also tendered his good offices and interference, wherever they could be employed, in aid of the enterprise. The government of Sardinia here appreciated the advantage which it would gain by the projected route, as the new roads through Piemont from Genoa, to Arona on the Lago Maggiore, and thence by the lake to Locarno, opened a new

source of commercial enterprise to the subjects of Sardinia.

The formation of the new route over the St. Bernardin was begun in the year 1818, and the execution of the works was confided to M. Pocobelli, known as the engineer of the route from Bellinzona to Lugano, by the Monte Cenere.

In the year 1824, the route was completed through an extent of twenty-four leagues. From Coire to the summit of the St. Bernardin, distant fifteen leagues, the road rises 5113 English feet; and from the summit to Bellinzona, distant eleven leagues and a half, the descent is 6289 feet. The expense of constructing the road, including the compensation to proprietors on its line, did not amount to 80,000*l.* sterling. Wood, and common lands, were granted by the government.

Formerly the bailliage of Chiavenna was annexed to the Grisons, and free intercourse existed between this canton and the Lake of Como, by the Splugen. The transit of merchandise was lightly taxed, merely to keep the road in repair, and the Grisons did not feel the necessity of making the route of the St. Bernardin more practicable than that of the Splugen, which was open to them for beasts of burden: but when, after the expulsion of Napoleon, the Italian bailliages were annexed to Lombardy, and the power of the Austrian government extended to the summit of the

Splugen, then the establishment of the new road became of the highest importance to the people of the Grisons; for their commerce was restrained by tolls and duties, exacted on the route of the Splugen.

The new line of road promised important advantages also to the people of the canton of the Tessin; and upon the proposition of the Grisons to construct the route over the St. Bernardin, the government of the former canton promised a subsidy. In the course of their negotiations in 1817, they agreed to advance 200,000 francs in aid of the undertaking, and to complete the little space of road from St. Vittore, the frontier village of the Grisons, in the Val Misocco, to Bellinzona. Whilst the parties waited for the ratification of this agreement by the grand council of the Tessin, the Austrian government sent emissaries into the canton, who resorted to every means in their power to stop the progress of the new road of the St. Bernardin, and to restrain the assistance which the people of the Tessin were disposed to give to that object. Threats and bribery were successful; the ratification was refused by the sovereign council of the Tessin, and this government, without scruple, sacrificed the commercial interests of its people, by opposing the measure, and favouring the transit of merchandise by the Splugen. It not only ceased to encourage the passage by the St. Bernardin, but it inflicted military punishment upon some of its



subjects, inhabitants of the village of Lumino, for having assisted its accomplishment by labouring to make that part of the route which lay through their territory passable for carriages. Efforts were also made by the Austrian authorities to influence, in the same way as they had in the Tessin, the patriotic members of the Grisons government, but without effect; they resisted with as much dignity as resolution, and in turn threatened to destroy the route of the Splugen on their side of the mountain, if the completion of the road of the St. Bernardin, between St. Vittore and Bellinzona, were any longer delayed through the intrigues of the Austrian emissaries. This bold and independent spirit, aided by the mediation of the King of Sardinia, at length succeeded, and the entire route of the St. Bernardin has now been accomplished.

The Austro-Lombard government foresaw that the establishment of the new road of the St. Bernardin would affect the commerce of the Splugen; and as early as that was begun, commenced a new road over the Splugen, to render this mountain also practicable for carriages; but neither the new road of the Splugen, nor the intrigues of the emissaries, could deter the Grisons from proceeding with that of the St. Bernardin. The Austrians constructed an admirable road on their side of the Splugen to the summit, under the direction of the able engineer Donnegana; and they expected that the Grisons,

availing themselves of the accomplishment of the Austrian road to their frontier, would at least complete it to the village of Splugen, where it unites with the new route of the St. Bernardin ; but, advantageous as it would be to the Grisons to have also a carriage-road communicating with Lombardy, they were too much exhausted by the expenses of the St. Bernardin to undertake it. After some negotiation, the Grisons gave permission to the Austrians to complete it themselves ; and the people of this canton now enjoy the advantages of two great roads across the Alps leading to their canton. By the St. Bernardin, travellers may post in a day's journey from Coire to Bellinzona ; and merchandise may be transported in four or five days, which formerly required eleven or twelve.

From the lake on the summit, the source of the Moësa, the road winds down the Italian side, near the course of the river, which it crosses at the bridge of Victor-Emanuel ; a name given, in compliment to the king of Sardinia, to a fine arch which spans the torrent 120 feet above its bed. The road continues to descend, by a succession of zig-zags, to the village of St. Bernardin, the highest on the Italian side, and situated upwards of 6000 feet above the level of the sea, amidst a dreary scene. There are mineral baths at St. Bernardin, which are frequented in summer. Two tolerable inns accommodate the visitors, who are usually

people from Italy and the Grisons: nearly fifty persons, have rested and spent some part of this season there. A continuation of tourniquets, or zig-zag courses of the road, wind rapidly down to the village of St. Giacomo, and thence to Misocco, the chief place of the valley.

Below St. Bernardin the pines reappear, and soon after the fine forms and rich foliage of the chestnut-trees. There are many fine falls of the Moësa in the descent to Misocco, especially one on the left near St. Giacomo. To view it well, I left the road, and went a little way into a forest, to a spot whence I saw the whole river tumbling down amidst the rocks in broken and abrupt masses, and throwing up the spray, on which an iris sported in the rays of the sun.

At Misocco we rested to refresh the horse and ourselves, at a good inn, where a travellers' book is kept, and where the innkeeper was as inquisitive and loquacious as his prototypes are said to be in America. Immediately below Misocco the beauties of the valley rapidly increase, and one scene in particular is unrivalled even in the Grisons. It is just below Misocco, where the ruins of its old castle crown a vast rock or hill that juts into the valley; and whilst it divides the upper from the lower Val Misocco, commands the communication between them, overhanging the torrent on one side, and the zig-zag road on the other.

In looking towards the lower valley, on approaching the castle, the range of mountains is seen on the right which separates the valleys of Misocco and Calanka; and on the left are the precipitous bases of the Monte Roggioni and the Monte Luadre. Down the side of the latter, amidst rocks and woods, several cataracts descend into the Moësa, which deeply rolls through a defile on the left of the castle. Below the ruins are seen the church of Soazza and the lower valley of Misocco.

The early history of the castle of Misocco is obscure, but conjecture has attributed its erection to the Goths, who availed themselves of its commanding situation to guard the pass of the St. Bernardin against the irruptions of the Franks into Rhætia. It was possessed by the Barons de Sax from 933 to 1482, when it was sold, with the valley of Misocco, to the celebrated and noble Milanese, Trivulzio, under whom the people of the valley became free citizens of the Grisons. He greatly distinguished himself in the wars of Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The change is very striking, from the cold, and its restraints upon vegetation on the St. Bernardin, to the climate immediately below Misocco, where the vine flourishes, Indian corn is raised, and the mulberry tree is successfully cultivated for silkworms: here the sun darts his southern rays

upon the traveller, who, two or three hours before, shivered in the bleak and cold regions of the Alps.

Soon after leaving the castle of Misocco, the traveller arrives at Buffalora—a spot remarkable for a very fine cataract, where, early in the afternoon, the sun may be seen shining *through* the torrent, as it descends from a great height in a single jet: the water, in dispersing into mist, intercepts the sun's rays, and exhibits a blaze of illumined particles: it is singular and beautiful to observe a waterfall under such circumstances. There is no valley in the Alps into which such numerous, varied, and beautiful cascades descend as into the Val Misocco.

From Lostallo, three quarters of a post below Misocco, the distance to Bellinzona is only a post and a half; the descent is so gradual through the valley below the castle of Misocco, that in four leagues it does not exceed 800 feet. Before arriving at Roveredo, the traveller passes the ruins of the castles of Grono and Calanka. Formerly, a pass existed by the valley of Calanka into the Grisons over the Mont Adula, and near the source of the Hinter-Rhine; but an extension of the glaciers has destroyed this route entirely. Roveredo is the chief town of the lower Val Misocco; below this place the valley widens. About a league from Roveredo is St. Vittore, the last village in the canton of the Grisons. The canton of the Tessin

commences at the village of Lumino. Shortly after, the Val Levantine is entered, where the Moësa joins the Tessin, which flows from the St. Gothard. At a short distance from the confluence, we reached Bellinzona, where the Albergo del'Aquila offered us tolerable accommodation; but the inns on the side of Italy are inferior in cleanliness and comfort to those in the Grisons.

## CHAPTER XX.

Bellinzona—Valley of Riviera—Sementino—Locarno—Lago Maggiore—Catholicism—Val Levantine—Val Blegno—Giornico—Dazio Grande—Val Piota—Pass of Stalvedro—Val Bedretto—Airolo—Ascent of the St. Gothard—Val Tremola—Summit—Hospice—St. Gothard—Descent to Val Ursern—Andermatt—Trou d'Uri—Devil's Bridge—Contest of the French and Russians—Krachenthal—Göschenen—Amstag—Swiss Soldiers—Altorf.

*September 4th.*—After parting with my civil guide, Jacques Faar, who returned early to his dear giantess at Naufanen, and his post-house at Andeer, I strolled round Bellinzona; but I was disappointed in not finding it picturesque; or rather, that, in spite of its beautiful situation amidst the mountains, and the varied surface of the ground upon which its three castles are placed, it presents from every near point of view long lines of embrasured walls, that destroy the picturesque.

Bellinzona is the key to Switzerland by the various passes which débouche into the Val Levantine: to the forest cantons, by the St. Gothard; to Dissentis, and the valley of the Vorder Rhin, by the Lukmanier; and to the pass of the Bernardino, by the valley of Misocco. The important station of Bellinzona has exposed it to sieges and

suffering in every contest in which the Swiss have been involved. The Alps afforded to the people of this city little protection from the hordes of early barbarians who descended through the Val Levantine, or from the later barbarians of the French army, who, at the end of the eighteenth century, in the desire to extend the blessings of their republicanism, made a reckless sacrifice of the property, the liberty, and the lives of the Swiss. Bellinzona, though the chief place of the canton, is the seat of its government only alternately with Locarno and Lugano.

I hired a light voiture to take me to Locarno; and, after crossing the Tessin by a fine bridge, drove through the valley of Riviera, which, from the course of the Tessin through it to that part of Lago Maggiore which bears the name of the Lake of Locarno, is in fact a continuation of the Val Levantine. The road to Locarno passes by the western side of the valley, under the Mont Carasso, which is richly wooded, and the country is in a state of high cultivation, and abounding with all the productions of northern Italy. However unpicturesque Bellinzona may be, near to or within its walls, it is a fine object in all the views of the valley of which it forms a feature. The scenery at the bridge of Sementino is particularly striking, where, at the end of a deep recess in the mountain-side, a torrent is seen pouring out from the summit



into the valley, and the church of Sementino crowning the rocks high above the village and the vineyards: these are backed by the Mont Carasso. The eye then sweeping on the right from the base of this mountain, takes in the city of Bellinzona and the distant Alps, which terminate the valleys that lead up to the Bernardin and the St. Gothard. Across the rich plain of the Riviera, the road may be traced on the Monte Cenere, which leads from Bellinzona to the Lake of Lugano.

From Sementino the ride is very beautiful through delightfully situated villages all the way to Locarno. If an idea of the appearance of the peasantry of the Tessin have been formed from the prints of the costume of the canton, the traveller will not find any to agree with them; for though the day was a *fête*, and it is only then that any thing like the canton costumes can be fairly seen in any part of Switzerland, rags disguised the form, and dirt concealed the colour, of the nasty race who infest this valley: the men were so forbidding as to excite disgust, and were only one degree better than the women. The people of the canton bear a bad character, which, if it had not its origin in their squalid villanous appearance, is singularly in accordance with it. My guide, a native of Bellinzona, was full of unfavourable tales of the people of the valley below his city, though the distance is only nine miles from Bellinzona to Locarno.

Having arrived at Locarno, I ordered a boat to take me on the lake, and was rowed down to Brissago on the western side, where part of the road is formed which the government of Turin, in conjunction with the people of the Tessin and the Grisons, is constructing along the western shores of the Lago Maggiore, to facilitate the commercial communications, between Genoa and the Grisons, by the pass of the St. Bernardin, and with Switzerland, by a contemplated carriage-road over the St. Gothard. I spent the greater part of the day on the water, delighted with the brightness and beauty of the weather, the calm freshness on the lake, and the richness of the vegetation on its shores, where the fig, the olive, the pomegranate, and the orange ripen; and the myrtle and the jasmine bloom in the hedges.

Locarno is finely situated near the junction of many valleys—the Tessin, the Verasca, the Maggia, and the Centovalle: these, with the mountains, the lake, and the villages on its shores, present much variety in the scenery, and from every elevation, views of great beauty, particularly from one height, near the convent of Madonna del Sasso.

In the evening I returned to Bellinzona, by the same rich valley, and scarcely saw an exception to squalid poverty in the people. It is impossible to notice the filth, the laziness, and beggary of the inhabitants of the Catholic cantons

of Switzerland — of these the Tessin are perhaps the worst — without believing that the religion of the state in which these unfortunate people live is either a direct or the remote cause of their state of degradation, or that it operates as a powerful check to their advancement to such a state of social comfort and moral worth as their neighbours enjoy, who are less under the terrors of the Catholic church, and the influence of its priesthood. Where the confessional subjects every one to the chance of the abuses of its privileges, no man's cottage is a sanctuary from the intrusions of the priest, whose violations of decorum, and abuses of the confidence which he claims for his calling, become an example which his precepts cannot check: so much for the minister. Then the church demands, to sustain its influence and prove its power, so great a portion of the time of the labouring man, that fêtes, fasts, and processions, in honour of the Virgin and the saints, take one-third of the hours God has given to him for labour.

It is not, then, to be wondered at, that a people controlled by such religious observances as give a master to each man's mind, and can claim, under penalty, the utter waste of so much of his time, should lose the use of energies they dare not display, and be impoverished by being robbed of that time which, usefully employed, would establish habits of industry, and reward their exercise

with health and competence. It is not prejudice, but a fact, that the line which separates a Catholic from a Protestant canton is more decidedly marked by the squalid and poverty-stricken appearance of the people in one, contrasted with the look of independence among those of the other, than by any geographical line of demarcation.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, St. Carlo Borromeo, horrified at the progress which the doctrines of Luther were making in the Tessin, visited himself the valleys of Switzerland; and, whatever may have been his liberality with regard to worldly goods, and zeal to reform abuses in his own church, a more intolerant bigot in favour of its doctrines was scarcely to be found. The violence with which he pursued the reformers in the valley of Misocco, and urged their extirpation, led to a system of persecution, in which burning, confiscation, and banishment, were demanded by the church of Rome, in vindication of its temporal and fast-fading power.

5th.—I hired a light voiture last night, and started early to ascend the Val Levantine, having first tasted at a café the *acqua di cedro* for which the guide-books have celebrated Bellinzona more than it deserved.

Soon after leaving the capital of the Tessin, my new conductor drove me across the Moësa; and about eight miles above it, near Biasco, we passed

the entrance to the Val Blegno. I could see, from our route in the Val Levantine, the vast débris of the mountain which fell across the Val Blegno in the year 1512. The fallen mass arrested the course of the river Blegno, and formed a large lake, which continued above 200 years. In 1714 it burst a passage, and swept all within its power into the Lago Maggiore. Trees and pasturages now so far conceal this accumulation in the valley, that it would scarcely be noticed but for the tale of its dreadful disruption. There is little to excite attention in the Val Levantine, at least before the traveller arrives near Giornico: here the vast blocks of granite which have fallen into the bed of the torrent interrupt its course, and produce a succession of cataracts, which, seen through the ramifications of enormous chestnut-trees, that are firmly rooted between the rocks, have a highly picturesque appearance.

A little way above Giornico, on the road to Faido, I passed over the scene of action where, in 1478, a battle was fought and won by the Swiss against the Milanese. The quarrel was about a wood of chestnuts; and the Pope's nuncio, instead of acting as his character demanded, the part of a peace-maker, fomented the dispute until it produced the battle, which was rendered memorable by a *ruse de guerre* practised by a Captain Stanga, who commanded some of the troops of

the country. It was fought in winter ; and Stanga advised his men to turn the waters of the Tessin over the roads and meadows, and to provide themselves with crampons (spikes for their shoes). On the morning of the battle the field of action was covered with ice, and the disadvantage under which the Milanese thus fought contributed greatly to the success of the Swiss army.

We rested to refresh the horse at Faido, the principal town between Bellinzona and the St. Gothard. Here vines terminate, and the country assumes a more alpine character. The scenery, however, is rather tame at Faido ; there is a fine waterfall near it, it is true ; but in a country where waterfalls are as common as blackberries, it requires some striking peculiarity to engage the attention of the traveller.

About a league and a half above Faido is the Dazio Grande — a deep gorge, which takes its name from the establishment of a toll-house at the upper end of the ravine, where a tax is levied, to pay for the repairs which are constantly occurring in the defile, from the dilapidation of the arched terraces upon which the road is carried, or of the walls and *garde-fous*, which prevent the traveller falling over into the foaming torrent ; but the ravine, to have attained any celebrity for *les belles horreurs*, is the most uninteresting that I have passed through.

Above the Dazio the road enters the valley or plain of Piota, which is industriously cultivated, and, considering its elevation (3000 feet above the sea), very productive. This valley extends nearly two leagues through its course to the defile of the Stalvedro. The snowy mountains of St. Gothard tower over the lower ranges which terminate the plain, and the bases of mountains which form the ravine of Stalvedro sink to the insignificant appearance of a dike; though in itself lofty and grand when the traveller passes beneath the vast overhanging rocks, between which the Tessin forces its way, scarcely leaving room enough for a road to pass along its bank. Over the rock, on the left, is a watch-tower, supposed to have been built by one of the latest of the Lombard kings, who was conquered by Charlemagne, as it still bears the name of the tower of Desiderio. On passing this defile, the traveller enters the Val Bedretto, which leads, on the left, over the great chain, by the pass of the Naufanen, to the Ober-Valais.

The Val Bedretto terminates in a basin within the defile of Stalvedro, and about two miles from it is the little town of Airolo, at the foot of the St. Gothard. I was struck with the commercial bustle of the place: great numbers of mules, laden with merchandise, were constantly passing, and the inn wanted the quiet and retired character of a mountain auberge. Here I met a

French gentleman and his son, who had this day returned from an attempt to pass the Ober-Alp: he said the wind was so high on the mountains, that, unable to make way against it, *though they tried on their knees*, they had returned to Airolo, to pass by the Val Bedretto and the Naufanen. Now all this proved too much. The most urgent business would not induce any man to climb mountains on his knees; and, to shew that business was not a motive to such exertion, he returned from attempting a passage to the eastward, to make another which led only to the west.

I was informed at the inn at Airolo, that the engineers had left it only the day before, after having been engaged in surveying a line on the mountain, preparatory to the construction of a carriage-road over the St. Gothard, and that the operations would very soon be commenced. That by which I have travelled from Bellinzona would require little improvement; and from Göschenen, on the northern side of the mountain, I am informed that the road is good to Fluelen, on the lake of Uri. I have hired a guide to carry my luggage and conduct me to Altorf to-morrow, and dismissed my voiturier, contented with a Napoleon for his services during a long day's journey from Bellinzona to Airolo.

6th.—We started early, up one side of the basin of the Val Bedretto, by a paved mule-path,



and soon reached the skirts of the last pine-forest at the Capella del Bosco. The scene looking back upon Airolo is extensive ; for the eye commands a view of the Val Levantine, over the gorge of Stalvedro, to the Val Piota, and, far distant, the boundary formed by the mountains on the right of the Hinter-Rhin. At the Capella del Bosco, the muleteers usually pray for protection over the pass, or, in descending, offer their thanksgivings for a safe journey.

A zig-zag path leads up through the wood to the Val Tremola, where there are fine pasturages ; but towards the pass the mountains close in, and scarcely leave room for the mule-path and the torrent which passes through it. Before entering the defile, the road crosses a miserable stone bridge without parapets. “ It is not,” says Simler, a Swiss historian, “ that the bridge trembles, and is therefore called the Ponte Tremola, but that the passengers here begin to shake and tremble with dread at the sight of the ravine, and fear of the dangers which they have to encounter there.” We passed it without the due exhibition of terror ; and at the upper extremity we found an abrupt and rugged ascent to the summit of the St. Gothard, amidst blocks of granite, which, wildly strewn about, present dangerous precipices in the path, and savage desolation all around. This was the scene of a severe contest on the 24th of September,

1799, between the Russians and the French, when the latter were defeated. Rudely cut on a rock, to commemorate the event, can still be traced SUWAROFF, VICTOR ; but the victory was useless : the French fought to prevent the junction of Suwaroff with the Imperialists, and the French generals, by their skill and successes, subsequently attained that object, and compelled the Russians to make the celebrated retreat of the Muottathal.

The desolate summit of the St. Gothard pass, 6500 feet above the level of the sea, scarcely deserves the name of a plain. The path winds over varied and broken ground, to the inn, which is situated at the greatest elevation of the pass : it serves as a place of shelter, but the accommodations are miserable. Here, however, we rested. My guide thought himself in capital quarters ; drank the thin wine as if it had been nectar on Olympus, instead of swipes on St. Gothard ; and gave me, whilst he chose to rest, time enough to write to my friends in England.

Formerly, there was a small convent, or hospice, on this summit ; it existed as early as the thirteenth century, and was one of those benevolent establishments that were founded upon the alpine passes where there was much intercourse, for the relief and protection of travellers. It was destroyed by an avalanche in 1775 ; two years later it was rebuilt upon a larger scale. In 1799 it was pil-

laged by the French army ; and some soldiers of that nation being stationed there daily during the following winter, they burnt all the wood of the building which they could collect, and left it a ruin, from which it has never been restored.

On leaving the hospice to descend the valley of the Reuss, the rudely paved road wound between several lakes, the sources of the rivers which stream from each side of the mountain, the Tessin flowing towards Italy, and the Reuss towards the Lake of Uri. The largest of the lakes on the summit is called the Lucendro, and it is the principal source of the Reuss. The scene on the summit is wild and desolate, surrounded by high mountains, which are surmounted by snows and glaciers, where an impressive silence reigns, which is scarcely ever broken, except by the bells of the passing mules, or the song of the muleteer.

The origin of the present name of this mountain, Saint Gothard, has been as perplexing as its early history ; some, deriving it from the Celtic words *got* and *arth*, suppose that it owed its name to the worship of a divinity on this high mountain ; others derive it from the Goths, who, when they were driven out of Italy, in the sixth century, established themselves in the valleys of the canton of Uri ; but the most probable origin of the name is from a chapel dedicated to Saint Gothard, who was a bishop of Hildesheim in the

twelfth century, in honour of whom the abbots of Dissentis raised a chapel on these heights, which were within their jurisdiction. What is known concerning this pass in the dark ages, has been chiefly preserved in the archives of the convent of Dissentis.

From the lakes on the summit the road descends over broken and rocky ground, towards the valley of Ursern, through which the Reuss flows in its descent to the Lake of Uri; and there is no relief to the traveller from an uniform sterility, until he arrive at the village of Hospital, or Hospenthal, where there was formerly a hospice, founded in the thirteenth century, for the benefit and assistance of those who passed that way. It is situated in that part of the Val Ursern which spreads out into a little plain, having, at its north-eastern extremity, the village of Andermatt, at the foot of the passage which leads to Dissentis by the Ober-Alp; and in the opposite direction, a road by the Val Ursern leads over the Furca to the Valais. The appearance of Hospital is rather picturesque, from a tower, the remains of an old castle, but there is no wood in the valley; a small pine-forest above Andermatt, which was formerly preserved most scrupulously, as a check to the avalanches which threaten destruction to the village, was destroyed during the campaign of 1799.

The meadows which the road crosses to arrive at the village of Andermatt are tranquil even to solitude. Here I had excellent fare at a comfortable inn, and made amends for the privations at the miserable hut on the summit; and I found in the travellers' book the records of many adventurous excursions, and the names of many friends. This means of recalling the memory of those who have gone before us on the same route, is a source of high gratification. The character of repose in the little plain of Andermatt is strongly contrasted with the scene upon which I entered when I left the Val Ursern to follow the course of the Reuss. The road lay through a gallery pierced in the rock which overhangs the river, and around which there was formerly fixed a frame or scaffolding, upon which travellers and beasts of burden were obliged to make their dangerous passage. The present road, through the granite rock, was made in 1707, at the expense of the canton of Uri; it is two hundred and twenty feet long, and in height and breadth twelve feet; it bears the name of the Urnerloch. From the gallery, a steep path leads down to the Devil's Bridge, where a single arch of seventy feet span, one hundred feet above the cataract, is thrown across the torrent, which rushes obliquely beneath, and descends, within a short distance, above three hundred feet. It is not possible to conceive a more

appalling scene than that which is presented at the Devil's Bridge, by the height of the rocks, the narrowness of the defile, and the roar and rush of the torrent beneath. On the lower side of the ravine, the road, or rather the path, by which the bridge is left in passing through the gorge, is partly cut out of the vast wall of rock which rises immediately above the road to a great height, and partly rests on arches firmly built into the rough surface of the rocks beneath, which serve to support the road as a terrace. The sides of the rock below the path descend perpendicularly to the torrent; and a low wall on the border of the terraced road is the only protection from the danger of falling into the horrible abyss beneath. The waters of the Reuss, in descending to the bridge, turn abruptly to the right to pass beneath the arch, and then appear to rush with increased rage and violence, from the momentary restraint which they encountered from the angle in the gulf. The bridge itself does not contribute much to the sublime impression which the scene makes, unless the spectator be upon it; but it is impossible to think of such a structure, in such a situation, without shuddering at the idea of the danger to which those who built it must have been exposed. Muller conjectures that the Devil's Bridge was originally a work of the Lombard kings, whose dominions extended northward to the valley of the Reuss.

The fearful emotions excited by these scenes are increased by the recollection that it was here some dreadful contests took place between the French and the Imperialists during the campaign of 1799. For the following account, from the "*Précis des Evénemens Militaires*," by the Comte Dumas, it would be difficult to find a parallel. On the 15th of August, 1799, the French general Lecourbe, having joined the brigade of General Loison on the same day that he had carried the defences of the Mayenthal, advanced to secure the important post of the Saint Gothard, and, about four o'clock, met the outposts of the Imperialists, and forced them to fall back upon their entrenchments at the Devil's Bridge; these rested upon the rocks on the right bank of the torrent of the Reuss. The French presented themselves at the bridge, and, charging the Austrians, reckoned upon passing it in the confusion with them, when, suddenly, the bridge disappeared between the parapets. Thirty feet of its length had fallen, with those who were fighting upon it, into the gulf below, and the remaining combatants were separated. This event forced the French grenadiers, who had advanced to the charge, to effect a retreat; but, borne on by those who were behind them, they were, for some time, exposed to a murderous fire from the Imperialists on the opposite rocks. During the night the Austrians re-

treated by the Ober-Alp, to avoid being cut off by the brigade of General Gudin, who had made a *détour* by the Grimsel, and fought his way, with incredible difficulty, across the Furca, to fall upon the rear of the Imperialists; Lecourbe's troops, who had, during the night, repaired the bridge, found Gudin's brigade, on the morning of the 16th, on the right bank of the Reuss, in possession of the enemy's position. The conquest of the pass of the Saint Gothard was the consequence, and, within forty-eight hours of the general movement of the French, Lecourbe was master of the summit and the valley by which he had ascended; but this important passage was reconquered in little more than a month by the Russian army, under Suwaroff, who crossed the Saint Gothard to effect a junction with the Austrians. When he descended to Andermatt, he found that the Urnerloch had been blocked up, the rocks in the descent to the bridge blasted and strewn in the path, part of the bridge blown up, and other obstacles thrown in the way of his advance; but the Russians, rendered desperate by hunger and resistance, reopened the gallery, and repaired the bridge, by throwing beams across, and lashing them together with the officers' scarfs. Hundreds of soldiers fell, in the struggle, into the abyss of the Reuss, before they drove the French from their position, and descended into the valley between the Urnerloch



and Göschenen. Here it is that the engineers will have the greatest difficulties to contend with in forming the new road, which it is intended to make practicable for carriages, by the route of the St. Gothard.

From the Devil's Bridge to Göschenen the valley is dreary and savage. The Reuss is twice crossed before it reaches Göschenen : in its course thither it descends with so much noise, as it dashes over and among the rocks, that it has given to this part of the valley the name of the *Krachenthal*. Enormous masses of granite lie in the bed of the torrent, and on the sides of the mountains. Not far from Göschenen there is an immense block, which the people of the valley call the *Teufelstein*, and say the devil dropped it there. My guide believed the tale he told me,—that the devil was so indignant at their having given his name to the bridge above, that he swore he would crush it, and lugged this stone so far to accomplish his intention ; but he tired under his burden, and dropping it where I saw it, relinquished his vengeance. At Göschenen I parted with my guide, and hired a char about to return down the valley. After having crossed a mountain torrent which flows by the village, we entered upon a good carriage-road which conducts to Altorf. Below Göschenen the road passes beneath forests of pines, and through villages surrounded by cultivation. There are

some fine points of view in descending to Amstag, principally from a part of the road that rises high above the Reuss, which is seen foaming at the base of a well-wooded ravine ; in the background of this fine scene is the lofty and beautiful form of the Windgelle mountain. Soon after passing the torrent of the Mayerbach, which descends from the Susten Alp, the traveller crosses the Reuss at the Pfaffensprung, a bridge of ninety feet span, at a great height above the torrent : the situation is striking, but from no point of view picturesque. Every extraordinary situation in the alpine districts has its tale of romance. The Pfaffensprung (the monk's leap) owes its name to the *fact*, that a monk, escaping with a damsel whom he was carrying off, leapt across this gulf with his prize !

Thence we descended to Amstag, a village at the base of the Windgelle. Just before our arrival there, I met some more recruits going to aid the King of Naples : and at the inn at Amstag, where we rested for a short time, the landlord exultingly asked me if I had not met these *braves* ; —legal bravoos would have been a much better name for them. There are three classes of soldiers : the truly brave and honourable, those who defend their own homes and hearths ; —the hired soldier, who enters upon it as a profession, honourable because “one murder makes a villain — mil-

lions a hero," whose services are sold only to his country, and whose apology is honour; — the third class is so utterly detestable, that language cannot express a just indignation of wretches who can be proud of the dishonour of being the murdering tools of any despot who will hire their services to crush the liberties of their fellow-men. These recruits, from the country of Tell, and even from his native village, are going to serve Naples, and another regiment is forming for the service of Ferdinand of Spain. The truly heroic age of Switzerland was that in which the virtuous and patriotic leaguers delivered their country from the tyranny of the house of Hapsburg, and the control of the empire, from 1308 to 1476. Soon after this period, the people of the Waldstetten, elated with their successes, and conscious of their strength, began not only to embroil themselves in quarrels with their neighbours, but ultimately to hire themselves as soldiers to serve any foreign government, requiring little excitement to war and outrage, beyond the hope of gain. They were always prepared to draw the sword for pay; and when their services were purchased by contending parties, it sometimes happened that Swiss opposed Swiss; then these hired wretches cut the throats even of their brethren. Their character as invincible soldiers was destroyed at the battles of Marignano and Pavia; the charm was ended by which they had

often conquered; and though their heroism was not less, they had suffered such repeated defeats, from soldiers as brave and well disciplined as themselves, that their blood was no longer worth the price which had been paid for it, and they returned, defeated, and driven from an infamous course, to the honourable employment of cultivating their soil. But the tyrants who cannot trust their insulted subjects, can still hire in Switzerland degraded cut-throats for their dishonourable service. Shame to the Swiss nation for suffering this stain to be sanctioned by their governments in the 19th century!

From Amsteg to Altorf the road is excellent, but without much interest. The valley becomes richer in wood, particularly in walnut-trees; it is every where more cultivated, and the soil is very productive. Before arriving at Altorf, the traveller crosses the torrent which descends from the Val Schaechen, of which the inhabitants are said to be the finest race of people in Switzerland. Nearly opposite to the embouchure of the Schaechen is the village of Attinghausen, by which a road passes over the Surenen Alps to the valley of Engleberg. It was nearly dark when I was welcomed at a comfortable inn close to Tell's Tower in Altorf.

*In Switzerland the country is too small with resources so slight & its population so great that numbers of young men*

*too well born or educated for agricultural purposes. Knowing that most of the liberal professions are over-crowded & underpaid are compelled to seek in foreign countries a means of livelihood. The army is the profession the most within their reach.*

## CHAPTER XXI.

William Tell—The Truth of his History—Altorf—Fluelen—Tellen-platte—Chapel—Fête—Lake of the Waldstetten—Gersau—Lucerne—Monument to the Swiss of the 10th of August, 1792—Annual Fête after the Harvest—Mont Pilate—Alpnach—Slide of Mont Pilate—Sarnen—St. Nicolas de Flue—Lungern—Brunig—Meyringen.

*September 7th.*—I awoke this morning with the miserable conviction that the fine weather had ceased, and that the torrents which I heard pouring without would probably break in upon all my arrangements for the completion of my journey. The pelting of the pitiless storm was unceasing. It was dark; I groped for my watch, and felt that it was four o'clock. When daylight appeared, I had a sort of horror of turning out and looking upon the change; but when I did, I found that the morning was as bright and beautiful as last evening promised it would be, and that the fiend which had worried my imagination was a stream, working a mill, close to the inn, of which the sound had deceived me.

I was now more completely in Switzerland—at least I had the feeling of being so—than I had

before experienced in any part of the Confederation. I was surrounded by reminiscences of Tell, —I was amidst the romance, if not the reality, of his adventures. The tower was before me, occupying the site of the lime-tree near which the child stood when his father's skill was put to so dreadful a test as that of shooting an apple placed on his son's head. The wise matter-of-fact men of our days, with minds that "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," have chosen to disbelieve this story. Why? Because some writer has asserted that it is a tale of Danish origin of an earlier time than that of Tell. Is this a reason for discrediting the story? Such an event was as likely to have happened twice as once; and if such a tale were known to Gesler, it probably suggested the cruel conditions offered by him to Tell; and could there be any conditions more probable for a tyrant to propose than to put so dreadfully to the test the skill of his victim? If the tale of Tell, as believed by his countrymen, be not true in all the leading facts,—of the apple, the storm, and the death of Gesler,—it is one of the most extraordinary errors into which the world was ever led; and that it should have been so misled, without foundation, is much more incredible than any part of the tale of Tell; for, if false, it is not an invention of yesterday, but may be traced back to the time, or near the time, of the hero. The subject

of Tell shooting the apple on his son's head is painted on the tower ; and wherever in this country Tell is represented in sculpture or in painting, the arrow and the apple are considered necessary emblems, until they appear to be adopted by consent as characteristic of Switzerland ; for they are sculptured, as already noticed, beneath the inscription on the bridge in the valley of Schams, though in the Grisons. Would a whole state fall into this error, and leave a bewildered doubter to throw discredit upon the history of one so distinguished as a patriot as William Tell ? But there is strong evidence of its truth in one place, at the chapel on the Tellen-platte, the rock at the foot of the Achsenberg, upon which Tell, in the storm, leapt when he escaped from the boat of Gesler. Only thirty years after Tell's death, which happened in the year 1358, this chapel was built to commemorate the event of his escape, and a series of pictures in fresco on the walls represent the principal events of his life : shooting at the apple on his son's head is one of the series. In the year of the completion of this chapel, 1388, at the general assembly of the people, there were present one hundred and fourteen persons who had known Tell during his life : these would not have allowed a falsehood to be recorded to aid, by the addition of romance, the immortal reputation of their countryman.

There is an air of still life about Altorf, as if it had never recovered from the devastation of the fire in 1799, which nearly destroyed the whole town : many houses are uninhabited, and many more uninhabitable ; but the large overhanging roofs, the peculiar construction of the houses, and the costume of the people, impress the stranger forcibly with a sense of the novelty of his situation. The mountains which immediately surround the town are richly wooded, and the soil cultivated in the valley, highly productive. The new carriage-road over the St. Gothard will do much for the canton of Uri, and especially on the line of its course, by giving occupation to the inhabitants, and lessening that poverty, which now seeks, in busy idleness, the alms of the stranger.

I started early for Fluelen, the little port of Altorf, on the lake of Uri, and engaged a bark and two men, for thirteen francs, to take me to Lucerne, visiting by the way Tell's chapel and Gersau. From the port we soon reached the Tellen-platte, and landed. None but a man acquainted with the country could have ventured to spring on shore on this rock, and hope to escape. At the chapel there is an annual fête : mass is performed, and hundreds of the peasantry, in their barges, surround the rock and the chapel, and present a scene of deep interest, and of such humble devotion and proud patriotism, that,



however anomalous it may be elsewhere, church and state are on this occasion justly united to give expression to their grateful commemoration of the mercies received by their forefathers. Simond, in his "Switzerland," makes a mistake in asserting that the floor of the chapel is not more than three feet above the water; and as the chapel is never injured by the storms of the lake, asks his readers to form an estimate of such tempests as alarmed Gesler. But the floor of the chapel is more than twelve feet above the lake; and he forgets his own comments upon Swiss boat-building, for if the bark of Gesler was like the wretched boats which now ply on the lake of the Waldstetten, a little storm would occasion great danger.

The scene, when lying off the chapel, of that portion of it which is called the Lake of Uri, is very impressive. The mountain bases sink abruptly to the lake, and their summits rise boldly from 4000 to 8000 feet above it. The precipitous faces of the Achsenberg are among the grandest of these objects; and looking back on the valley of the Reuss, the glaciated summits of the Surenen Alps bound the valley. This part of the lake is the deepest, being in some places 600 feet.

I did not land at Grutli, which was pointed out to me on the shores, nearly opposite to Brunnen. The boatmen—the knaves!—persuaded me, that if I rested, as I proposed to do,

at Gersau, we should arrive too late at Lucerne. It is impossible to create by description any just idea of the beauties of the Lake of the Four Cantons. From Fluelen, its direction is nearly due north to Brunnen, the port of the canton of Schwyz ; thence to Stanz its course is west ; afterwards passing by an opening to the north, above Gersau it again takes a course nearly westerly to Lucerne ; its whole length from the port of Altorf to Lucerne is above nine leagues. From the sinuous plan of the lake, and the infinite variety in character of the mountains, the forests, and the meadows, the towns and hamlets, on its shores, each turn presented a new view, and I enjoyed its magnificent scenery in one of the finest days that ever brightened its surface. I put in at Gersau, formerly the capital of the smallest republic in Switzerland, but which preserved its integrity above 400 years : my boatmen were glad to rest in the heat of the day. I dined there ; and a peculiar fish, smooth as an eel, was served, but any thing more diabolical in taste was never placed before a traveller : the name of it has escaped my recollection.

From Gersau we rowed on to Lucerne, and I arrived there early enough to enjoy a walk about the city and its environs. The great *lion* of Lucerne, the sight which no stranger fails to visit, is the colossal Lion of Thorwaldsen, placed here to commemorate the heroism and devotion of the

Swiss Guards, who fell in defence of the Tuileries, August 10th, 1792. This monument was executed by subscription: the thought was suggested by Colonel Pfyffer, one of the survivors of that dreadful massacre of the Swiss. The subject is treated with great poetical skill. A lion pierced with a lance is dying, and covering with his body a shield, which bears the emblem of the *fleur-de-lis*. It is difficult by description, and even by a drawing, to give an idea of its effect; for many go expecting only to see something common-place, or at most, pretty; but whether it is that its magnitude, or its very appropriate site, aids the design of the monument to excite a powerful emotion in the observer, it fails not to produce this effect. The face of the rock was made smooth, in which an excavation, forty-four feet long and twenty-eight high, formed a recess in which the lion lies, in bold and complete relief, cut out of the rock. The lion is twenty-eight feet long and eighteen high, and the execution of it was entrusted to a young sculptor of the name of Ahorn, of Constance. Pfyffer suggested to Thorwaldsen the way in which the subject should be treated, and Thorwaldsen modelled it, and sent a cast in plaster of the design. Above the grotto is inscribed *Helvetiorum fidei ac virtuti*; below it, the names of the officers and soldiers who perished; and of the few survivors of that dreadful day, who had contributed to the erection of this memorial.

A piece of running water bathes the base of the rock, and prevents a near approach to the monument. Shrubs and creeping plants are led about the top; and trees are so planted and arranged, that the effect of the whole is striking from many points of view. But whatever may be the taste of this memorial of the valour and fidelity of the Swiss, it records only an instance of mercenary servitude faithfully performed. Where are the public memorials of those brave Swiss—nobly and honourably brave—who fought the battles of their own country,—of those heroes of Lucerne, Gundoldingen, the Hertensteins, and others, who fought against the princes of Austria and Burgundy, and drove the invader and oppressor from their hearths, and established their freedom and the independence of their country? They will be remembered in the history of Switzerland when this record of the servile soldiery of their descendants has perished.

*Sept. 8th.*—I engaged a char last evening to take me to Winkel. On driving out of Lucerne I met great numbers of the peasantry crowding to the city, dressed in their gayest costume: it was an annual festival—a public and national thanksgiving for the blessings of the harvest. This grateful acknowledgment of mercies received, belongs not to any particular religion, but is due from all mankind; but it is only, however, I believe, in

Switzerland, that a day is annually set apart for this sacred duty. About an hour's drive brought me to Winkel, a little port, where I took a boat and crossed that beautiful portion of the Lake of the Four Cantons which bears the name of the Lake of Alpnach. On the way we passed part of the base of Mont Pilate, and observed the steam of the cauldron issuing from its apex—that peculiar appearance of the clouds rising from the lake on its summit, with which so many wild traditions of the mountain are associated. We left Stanzsted, or the port of Stanz, on the opposite shore. I had the pleasure of accommodating an English party in the boat I had hired; and they, in return, allowed me to be their companion in a char they engaged to go as far as Lungern. We saw a part of the ruins of the celebrated slide of Alpnach, which has been so interestingly described by Professor Playfair; but its course could not be traced beyond the shore. The object of establishing this slide was to bring down the large pine-trees from the forests high up Mont Pilate. After discharging them into the lake, they were taken, by the Reuss, the Aar, and the Rhine, through a course of a thousand miles, to the arsenals of Holland, on the German Ocean, where Napoleon had contracted for all the timber which could be so transported. The rapidity and force with which the trees were brought down, left

the observer equally astonished at the fact and the contrivance. They were brought down from an elevation of 2500 feet, by a slide nearly eight miles and a half in length, which was carried across three ravines, one of them 150 feet deep: sometimes under ground, but generally following the tortuous projections of the mountain, its declivity varying, with an average only one foot in 17 feet and a half; yet trees 100 feet in length, placed root-end foremost into the trough at the top, were discharged in six minutes into the lake! The peace of 1815 rendered this magnificent undertaking unprofitable, and it has since been allowed to go to decay: the last use made of it was to bring down timber to be employed in the building of the new church and spire at Alpnach. We saw this church—the *finest* modern ecclesiastical structure in Switzerland.

From the village of Alpnach the road ascends to the neat little Swiss town of Sarnen, situated at the northern extremity of its lake. Here there is a saint in high odour, Nicolas de Flue—one who was born in the neighbourhood; and however true the proverb may be, that prophets have no honour in their own country, it is clear that it does not apply to saints, for the people around the lake of Sarnen appear never to have heard of any other object of adoration than St. Nicolas (Nic is an odd name for a saint!) de Flue.

From the upper extremity of the lake the road abruptly ascends a hill called the Kaiserstuhl, which forms the embankment of the lake of Lungern, and separates it from the lake of Sarnen. From this ascent, the lake of Sarnen, Mont Pilate, and the distant Rigi, are fine objects. At Lungern the road ceased to be practicable for chars; and the ladies of the party I had joined, having hired mules, proceeded with guides; I went on foot to reach the Brunig by a shorter road, which lies through scenes that are beautiful, from their retired and sylvan character, and in which, for some time, I saw nothing to remind me of my proximity to the Alps. On attaining the summit I found a toll-house and a station of gens-d'armes: they appeared to be out of place here. The view from the station is very beautiful. From the western side of the Brunig two roads branch off: one, on the right, leads to the lake of Brientz; the other, to Meyringen and the Oberhasli. The party that had ascended by the mule-path soon joined, and we altogether proceeded to Meyringen. The valley in which this village is situated was presently seen below us, bounded on the right by the mountains of the pass of the Grand Scheidegg—the Wetterhorn, and Eiger, and in the extreme distance by the glaciers of the Aar and the mountains of the Grimsel. In the valley to which we descended, skirting a fine forest, we saw

numerous villages and pasturages. The situation of the falls of the Reichenbach was pointed out to us ; but, large as are the masses of water when near them, here, from the magnitude of the objects around, they were almost undistinguishable. We reached Meyringen too late to visit the falls before dark.



## CHAPTER XXII.

Falls of Reichenbach — Imgrund — Handek — Falls of the Aar — Schnaps — Höllen-platte — Hospice of the Grimsel — Travellers — Todten-See — Glaciers of the Rhone — Oberwald — Obergestelen — Eginenthal — Glacier of the Gries — Lammergayer — Kehrbachi — Fall of the Toccia — Formazza — Val Formazza — Val Antigorio — St. Marco — Crevola — Val d'Ossola.

*Sept. 9th.*—I engaged a guide, Hans Schmit, to accompany me over the Grimsel, the Gries, and the Simplon. He had no mule of his own, but he borrowed one of a lad, who made it a condition that he should accompany us, not with any consideration for his services, but, as he was a young guide, to become acquainted with a line of country he had not visited. Whilst the mule was getting ready, Hans conducted me across the valley to the falls of the Reichenbach; but, fine as they unquestionably are, there was nothing so striking in their locality or their magnitude as to make them worth any extraordinary trouble to visit.

Meyringen, not far from the head of the Lake of Brientz, is at the foot of the Scheidegg, the

Brunig, the valleys leading to the Titlis, and the Oberhasli leading to the Grimsel : it is well-cultivated, richly wooded, and abounding in celebrated waterfalls and fine ruins. The Vale of Meyringen concentrates as much of what is alpine in its beauties as any valley in Switzerland.

My companions across the Brunig had started early for Grindenwald by the Grand Scheidegg. In ascending towards the Grimsel from Meyringen, the head of the plain is soon attained, and thence the road rises rather abruptly above a deep fissure cut by the Aar through the rocks which separate, like an embankment, the vale of Meyringen from that of Imgrund. The view of the former valley is beautiful from the ascent to this embankment ; and the road lies amidst numerous beeches and other trees, which reminded me of similar forest scenes in England. The little plain of Imgrund associates with itself every pleasurable emotion which a pastoral life can excite, — a place where Gesner might have dreamt his life away, it seems so separated from the busy scenes of the world. From Imgrund the road rapidly ascends through forests of larch and beech, and often overhangs at a great height the deep torrent of the Aar ; thence descending towards the river in a narrow valley, I soon reached Guttanen, the last village where there is an inn in the ascent to the Grimsel. Here I rested a short time. From

Guttanen, the difficulties of the road and the sterility of the valley increase. The Aar is twice crossed before reaching Handek, where a few châteaux are established amidst glaciers and cataracts, and scenes the most stupendous, savage, and dreary. At a short distance from the châteaux is the great fall of the Aar, where two torrents joining at the head of the "hell of waters," fall together with a horrible fracas into a deep gulf, which the traveller can overhang from some projecting rocks above, by clinging to a pine-tree; but the base is concealed from him by the mist that hovers over the basin which receives the torrents. Deep in the ravine the Aar is seen to pass on, a mere line, white from its foaming amidst the rocks that confine it: beyond lies the distant valley and the mountains which bound the horizon.

The fall can be seen from below at a station where less sense of danger is excited, but the effect of the scene is not so striking as from the head of the cataract. From the fall, my guides introduced me to a châteaux at Handek where some men were engaged with a still, extracting a strong spirit from the root of a variety of gentian: they smacked their lips in approbation, after taking off their glasses of these *schnaps*. I never tasted any thing so detestable; I could not get rid of the villanous flavour for many hours.

Above Handek the barren and savage character of the valley increases ; and about half a league beyond the châteaux, the road, rising high above the torrent of the Aar, and on the brink of a precipice, passes over the smooth, convex, and inclined surfaces of masses of granite of great extent ; these are worn smooth by avalanches which have swept away the barriers that, from time to time, have been raised to guard the traveller in this fearful part of the passage, which is particularly dangerous when the surface has been wet and has frozen. I dismounted here at the request and precaution of my guide, as a slip of the mule's foot would be inevitable destruction, and it is a situation in which a man can find in his own feet greater security. Hans told me, that upon one occasion a person whom he accompanied chose to ride, in spite of remonstrance ; the mule slipped, the guide seized the clothes of the traveller, whose feet were fortunately out of the stirrups, and saved him ; but the mule fell over the precipice into the gulf, and was destroyed. The largest surface bears the name of the *Höllen-platte*, and is 120 paces across.

From Handek to the hospice of the Grimsel, the Aar is often traversed on bridges, which appear to be ill constructed, and in situations so dreary as to excite ideas of danger which do not in reality exist, though the foaming torrent of the Aar, as it passes beneath, would leave any escape from accident

hopeless. There is, at a short distance from the worst of these, some relief from this idea of danger, if not from dreariness, at a little pasturage called Roderichs-boden ; about a league beyond, and over a road still rugged and sterile, the traveller reaches the hospice of the Grimsel, situated 6000 feet above the level of the sea, where, during what is considered *the season*, scarcely a day passes without visitors ; and often these are too numerous for the accommodations which have been provided. On my way from Roderichs-boden I overtook a flock of goats, and catching one, milked her into my leathern cup, and obtained a delicious and refreshing draught.

The hospice is an inn, and the man who holds it is appointed to remain there from March to November, to assist poor travellers gratis ; the expense is met by subscriptions in Berne, Geneva, and other cantons of Switzerland : the situation of the hospice is extremely dreary ; it is surrounded by naked rocks, and on the brink of a little dark lake, rendered darker by contrast with patches and beds of snow, which lie unmelted through the year on its shores. I did not visit the glaciers of the Aar, in the vicinity of the hospice, which are said to deserve an examination : their vast extent, in connexion with others, exceeds belief ; but withdrawn from the world as these tremendous scenes are, they were, nevertheless, the sites of military

manœuvres and skirmishes between the Austrians and the French, during the campaigns of 1799, where hundreds perished.

At the hospice I found several English rambles, who had arrived from many points—the Furca, the Valais, and the Oberhasli, and whose destinations in the morning were as various. At a table-d'hôte supper, the assembly was rather motley: one, who talked loud and long, told us he had, with his sister—a red-faced, stout, vulgar-looking woman, then at the table—crossed *all* the passes of the Alps. I enjoyed the fun of obtaining negatives to my inquiries respecting particular passes, and embarrassing him so as at length to stop his volubility, for which I was nearly withered by a gorgon look from his sister. We retired early to our respective chambers.

10th.—The morning was very cold; most of the travellers met to take coffee before their departure. On the steps of the hospice I saw a young woman, whom Hans recognised as a girl from the pavé at Berne; and upon his inquiries about her being at the hospice, he learnt that she had left it to accompany the Englishman and his sister, he having promised to take her to England; but that she was getting tired of the treatment she received, in bearing all the baggage of the party, and walking so much. They were going to cross the Furca; and as far as the glaciers of the Rhone, they started

to go a route in common with myself. I saw the poor wench without bonnet or cloak, and apparently without any baggage of her own, laden with that of both her companions, and dragging up the fat sister, who had taken her arm, whilst the *gentleman* strolled at his ease and his leisure up the steep path to attain the col of the Grimsel. There were circumstances about the party which excited the attention of all, but a mystery which none could unravel. Hans thought there was something about it as villanous as it was vulgar.

It was a short hour's walk from the hospice to the summit, which has an elevation, according to Saussure, of 7224 English feet. Nothing can exceed the dreary prospects presented to us there—the bare and rocky ground, relieved only by patches of snow on the borders of a small still lake on the Valais side of the mountain, which bears a name as miserable as its aspect, the *Todten-See*; and beyond the rocks which surround the lake, nothing is seen but the tops of the mountains in the chain of the high Alps, bare, or clothed in eternal snows. “On l'appelle *Todten-Seelen*, ou *le lac des morts*,” says Saussure, “parce qu'on y jette les corps de ceux qui meurent en passant la montagne;” but Saussure has applied this name in error to the lake on the borders of which the hospice is built, which is the *Klein-See*; and the story of throwing the dead there is incorrect.

From the summit two roads diverge; the one on the right leads direct to Obergestelen—that on the left to the glaciers of the Rhone. The descent to these glaciers is by a steep and rather difficult path. The first view of them from this route is, perhaps, the most striking in which they can be seen, because their entire mass is observed, from the summit of the Galenstoc to the base, bounded on the sides by the passage of the Furca, which leads to the St. Gothard. The source of the Rhone is usually visited from below, where the nearest mass intercepting the highest, leaves an impression greatly inferior to that which the vast whole produces. From the glaciers the road descends to Oberwald, at first across a marshy little plain, and then by a rapid path in the glen, below which the Rhone, already a torrent, foams its way.

After descending for some time over a rudely paved path, and through a little pine-forest, near a chapel, the traveller is struck by a beautiful view of the Haut-Valais, with the villages of Oberwald, Obergestelen, and the mountains of the high range of the Alps, extending to the Simplon. Near Oberwald we met a party of travellers going to the source of the Rhone, and thence to the hospice of the Grimsel. The guides, known to each other, began a conversation, which became general. An elderly gentleman of the party, upon hearing that I was going to cross the Gries, begged, if I met a



person whom he described, that I would inform him that his uncle would wait for him at the hospice. This gentleman had a companion, a Greek : he was strolling, with his hands in his breeches' pockets — listless, uninterested, and utterly out of place in the Alps.

Oberwald affords no resting-place ; but accommodation and civility very different from that which Saussure experienced there, (*“Voyages dans les Alps”*), is now offered to the traveller at Obergestelen—a village which was a great *depôt* for cheese, sent from Switzerland across the Grimsel and the Gries into the north of Italy ; but the formation of the great roads across the Alps has lessened the traffic which was formerly carried on over the passes traversable only by mules. We rested at the inn to refresh the mule and ourselves.

To proceed towards the Gries, we crossed the Rhone a little below Obergestelen, and descended through a forest of larches on the left bank of the river, for about half an hour ; then turning through the village of Imloch, in the Eginenthal, a valley which descends from the Gries, the path rose towards this mountain, through a deep glen, in which there was a fine waterfall, and amidst vast larches, part of whose roots, trunks, and branches, overhung the torrent which descends from the Gries, and added greatly to the wildness of this

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part of the passage. Soon after, a rapid ascent led us above the vegetation of the larch, and the scene became as sterile and as savage as the approach to the Grimsel above Handek. In this part of the valley I met the expected traveller by the Gries, and delivered my message, for which I had his thanks, and the offer of a taste from his bottle of kirschen-wasser. At length the valley terminated in the glacier of the Gries, which appeared to forbid all further progress; yet the route to the Val Formazza lay directly across it. On the left, and before arriving at the glacier, a difficult mountain-path led across the Mont Luvino to Naufanen, and by the Val Bedretto to Airolo, at the foot of the St. Gothard. Before climbing the last ascent of the Gries, I fortunately obtained some milk at a *châlet*, and prepared to proceed on foot, as neither on the ascent nor descent would riding have been humane or prudent.

The path by which the summit of the Gries was to be gained was very difficult, though practicable for laden mules: after attaining it, on looking back, I was surprised to see, on the left, high above the valley of Egina, and higher even than the glaciers of the Gries, *châlets* and rich mountain-pasturages, speckled with cattle; and beyond the valley of Egina, which I had traversed, I saw the summits of the mountains of the

Oberland-Bernois. A perfectly safe path led, in twenty minutes, across the glacier of the Gries. Bare and scathed rocks rose on either side in terrible grandeur out of the glaciers to an immense height; the silence of the place added greatly to its sublimity; and I saw in this most appropriate spot, one of the large eagles of the Alps, the lammergayer, which was whirling its flight around a mountain-peak, and increased the deep emotion excited by the solitude of the scene. The river Toccia has its rise in the glaciers of the Gries, whence it flows through the valleys of Formazza, Antigorio, and Ossola, to the Lago Maggiore. The greatest height of the pass is 7900 feet above the level of the sea.

After leaving the glaciers, the road that proceeded towards Italy by the Val Formazza rapidly descended the side of the mountain, which was very steep; and so worn were the paths by travellers and cattle, that many of them were impassable to laden mules, as the ruts were narrow, and so deep that the load would drag or rest on either side of the bank of the rut, when the mule's feet were on the bottom of the path; in many places it was a mere gutter, three or four feet deep, without room enough for the arms to swing freely between the banks. We soon arrived at the bottom of the first slope, whence we successively reached little plains, which appeared to have been formed

where mountain-falls had laid barriers or embankments across the valley, which were afterwards filled up by deposits from the torrent. From one of these little plains to another below it, the descent was rapid and sometimes difficult. They were, considering their great elevation, rich in pasturage; and the cheese made there has a great celebrity. These plains are only inhabited in summer, except the lowest, where a little cluster of *châlets*, called *Kehrbachi*, is sometimes inhabited throughout the year. We had previously passed a deserted village of a dozen or twenty *châlets*; and this addition to the desolation of the high valley was more dreary and melancholy than any spot I had yet visited in the Alps. The road still descended steeply, and led to another plain, where the trees and the vegetation of a lower region began to relieve the tedium which the dreary passage of the Gries produced, and after passing a glen, we entered unexpectedly upon a beautiful little plain, where the Toccia flows quietly through the little hamlet and valley of *Auf-der-Frut*: at the termination of the plain, there was a small chapel and a cross on the brink of a shelf of rocks of great depth and extent. But the famous fall of the Toccia was unseen and unsuspected until I arrived at the edge of its summit, whence a difficult and zig-zag path led down on the left bank of the torrent. Saussure

describes this fall of the Toccia as the most remarkable cascade in the Alps. From below, the appearance of the fall was very striking, though, perhaps, not very picturesque; the river tumbles over ledges of rock in a cascade, extending at least a thousand feet in length, spreading out broadly at its base, and presenting from every point of view a remarkable and beautiful scene. About an hour's walk below the fall we reached Fructval, where Hans recommended our staying for the night, and where, he said, we could obtain better refreshment and better accommodation than at Formazza, though this was a larger place, and boasted of possessing an inn.

*Sept. 11th.*—The misery and discomfort of my lodgings at Fructval left it impossible for my imagination to descend to what could be worse at Formazza. Before I started, I had some conversation with mine host, who described the winters here as being very severe: he pointed out to me the height which the level snow had attained in the preceding winter, when it reached to the roof of his house. In the descent from Fructval to Formazza, a deep valley, fringed with pines, lay on the right of the road, and beyond it I saw the village of Formazza in its little plain, lying amidst the surrounding mountains. The language of the inhabitants of the upper part of this valley is German, and below Fopiano, Italian:

the traveller sometimes suffers by the confusion which arises from German and Italian names being given to one place ; thus Formazza and Al Ponte, in Italian, and Zumsteck and Pommat, in German, are all names for the same village ; its distance from Obergestelen is about eight hours. Near Fopiano, the road, after descending through a forest of firs, crossed the torrent by a bridge, in a very wild situation : vast blocks of granite filled the bed of the Toccia, amidst which the water forced its way, and passing beneath the old arch, made in its descent between the rocks a fearful noise. The scene in this gorge, for a short distance, was magnificent ; below it the valley widened, and the road continued, often amidst blocks of granite of such enormous magnitude, that upon one of these the ruins of a feudal castle remained ; and upon several, forest-trees were growing. In one place, near a bridge which leads by a path to the left bank of the river, the road passed between two of these great masses of granite. The ruins of a village, which had been destroyed by a mountain-fall, lay near the road, amidst the débris which had overwhelmed it. Observing some water-cresses in a brook, I was tempted to rest here, and with a biscuit from my bag enjoyed a temperate luncheon. I was amused and surprised at the horror expressed by the guides, who tried to dissuade me from eating

what they assured me was poisonous, and referred to its pungent flavour for proof. Is it possible that this delicious salad is unknown to the people of Meyringen?

A little beyond where the character of wildness and confusion was produced by the blocks which strewed the valley, between which the mule wound its way, a vast, smooth, and unbroken face of granite rose 400 or 500 feet above us, and in one place actually overhung the road, exciting fearful emotions. From the top a large tabular mass projected many feet, of which the plane under side was seen from below, threatening one day to fall from its present apparently insecure station. Pines and other forest-trees are growing on its upper surface, and the increasing weight of these will perhaps hasten the catastrophe. A *wise* precaution, however, had been adopted against this probable accident: a picture of the Virgin had been fastened to the face of the rock below, and the peasantry passed now with perfect confidence beneath it. A little beyond St. Rocco, the first vines announced the approach to Italy: walnut and chestnut-trees attained here a great size, and vegetation was luxurious.

Near St. Michel the valley widened, and we proceeded through some beautiful scenes, not improved by a Catholic vagary—a procession of the

villagers to a *Calvary*. Having passed through the village of Premia, we crossed the river which descends from Mont Albrun, and falls into the Toccia : below this confluence the valley loses the name of Formazza, and takes that of Antigorio. Nearly a league from the confluence was the village of Crodo, where a Sardinian custom-house was stationed. Between Crodo and St. Marco the road twice crossed the Toccia, amidst pleasing and various scenery, where the air was perfumed by the purple cyclamen, which covered the banks and hedges more thickly than primroses are found in England. A little beyond St. Marco a prospect of great beauty was presented : in the distance I saw Domo d'Ossola, surrounded by the fine mountains which bound the Val d'Ossola ; and beneath me lay a little plain watered by the Toccia, which flowed through it. The road towards Crevola continued on the right bank of the river, amidst scenes of great richness ; and at every turn some beautiful view was presented. Near Crevola the road from St. Marco fell into the great route of the Simplon, which, after passing the celebrated bridge of Crevola upon that route, led to the town of Domo d'Ossola.

The pass of the Gries is little known, and no military events are recorded which have inflicted the curses of war upon the quiet inhabitants of the Val Formazza. During the demand for the



services of the Swiss, in the wars of the 15th century, some divisions of their troops passed by the Gries ; and when Switzerland became the scene of contest between the Russians and the French, the latter availed themselves of this pass for the march of a portion of their troops, but no sites are pointed out as stained by battles. The travelling historian, therefore, may be disappointed in his passage of the Gries ; but the artist, and the lover of the wild and the beautiful in nature, cannot fail to remember with pleasure the scenes presented to them in their excursion by this passage of the Alps.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Domo d'Ossola — A Man in Authority — Bridge of Crevola —  
 Val Dovedro — Gondo — Waterfalls — Great Gallery —  
 Algaby — Simplon Village — Landlady — Ascent to the  
 Summit — View of the Bernese Alps — Friends en route —  
 Brigg — Tourtemagne — Valais — Lausanne — Steam-boat —  
 Nyon — Home.

*Sept. 13th.*—I had sent the servant of the post-house where I slept, to the station of carabineers, to obtain the necessary signature to my passport, and permission for my guides to pass into the Valais by the Simplon. After waiting above an hour, I sent again, and sent Hans with him: another hour was wasted—the commandant, they said, refused to be disturbed. This did not suit my English feelings; I determined to go myself. I was told he was not up, and I could not see him. I insisted upon seeing him, as I had already been detained two hours beyond the time when my passport ought to have been ready. In short, I made a row, which disturbed the chief, who asked what the matter was; and learning that I was a traveller applying about my passport,

he desired me to walk up to his room, where he received me in his nightcap. On being informed how long I had been delayed, he apologised in the most gentlemanly way for the inconvenience he had put me to, and declared, that until my own application awoke him he was ignorant that any signature had been applied for. It was immediately given; and whilst I was there the persons who had refused to disturb his slumbers were ordered up and severely reprimanded for having subjected him to the suspicion of incivility and disregard to his official duties, especially when they were wanted so urgently by a stranger. The poor understrappers shrugged their shoulders, and looked as if they had witnessed a well-acted lie.

It was nearly nine o'clock before we got away. The morning was fine. We retraced our route of yesterday to the bridge of Crevola, and then entered the Val Dovedro, and turned round to take leave of Italy at that point; whence every traveller on his way by this route to its classic soils first sees the beautiful Val d'Ossola lying before him; where the bridge of Crevola is seen, by which the deep gorge of the Dovedro is crossed to enter the plain of the Val d'Ossola; it is one of the finest structures of its class in the world. A pier is built from the bed of the torrent to the height of 100 feet; resting upon this, and the magnificent buttresses which are

built up from the face of the rocks on either side, beams of the imperishable larch are thrown across, and carpentry of admirable structure supports the bridge. It is one of the few works of man which, surrounded by vast objects in nature, is not driven into insignificance.

Soon after leaving the bridge of Crevola we passed the village of Morgantino, where the quarries are worked for the white marble used at Milan for the triumphal arch of the Strada Sempione; thence we soon reached the first gallery, which is about 200 feet long, with a lateral opening for giving light to the passage. Above this place the valley widened and soon spread out on the right into a delightfully wooded plain, in which are the villages of Dovedro and Varzo: thence we proceeded up the valley: after crossing the torrent of the Cherasca, the rocks closed abruptly upon us, and we passed through a fearful defile. From this gorge we escaped near Trasquera, and entered upon the little commune of Isella, where the Sardinian custom-house is established on the frontier: here our passports were examined.

Above Isella the real horrors of the Val Dovedro begin. We soon reached the village of Gondo, where a strange-looking lofty building, like a great tower, serves as an inn and a place of refuge for travellers; here we rested the mule.

The scenery around and near Gondo is sublimely savage. A torrent rushes out on the left and forms a magnificent cataract. One of the striking features of the pass of the Simplon is the number and variety of the waterfalls in the Val Dovedro. Sometimes they gush out abruptly from some lateral gorges, and mingle their torrents furiously with the river ; at others, they descend, broken in their fall into mists, from the height of the summits of the vast rocks which overhang the road. Some are seen forming cascades, and moving in white foaming lines down the smooth faces of rocks which slope into the Dovedro.

After leaving Gondo, we turned rather abruptly into one of the finest parts of the pass, where the rocks rise like towers abruptly from the valley, and threaten to overwhelm the traveller. Here the road is admirably constructed upon the débris of these overhanging masses. Ascending by a zig-zag course, we soon reached the celebrated gallery of Gondo, which we entered by a bridge thrown across the cataract of the Frassinone, that descends from a great height above, and falls at least 100 feet below the bridge, into the torrent of the Dovedro. The immediate approach to the gallery from the Italian side offers perhaps the finest assemblage of objects, to excite an emotion of the sublime, that is any where to be found in the Alps; yet a part of its effect is lessened by seeing it some time before

the gallery is entered. Having gone into Italy by this route in 1821, my recollection is vivid of the *unexpected* and awful impression received from this scene, by my bursting suddenly upon it *from* the gallery; and I feel that, divesting myself of all consideration of a lessened interest from a revisit and a want of novelty, the scenery of the Val Dovedro is much finer, from the more sudden changes in the scenes, on approaching Italy, than on leaving it by the pass of the Simplon.

The gallery itself is nearly 600 feet long: there are two lateral openings to illuminate it. Looking out from these, the abyss is awful, and the roar of the waters beneath appalling. Opposite to one of the openings cut in the rock, is a memento of its completion—ÆRE ITALO MDCCCV.

Gangs of workmen at each extremity, relieving one another day and night, worked eighteen months in the formation of this extraordinary excavation. Above the gallery the torrent is crossed, and the road ascends for some way on the right bank of the river, beneath the overhanging rocks, which almost conceal the heavens, and high above the torrent which foams in the gulf below: this is particularly observed at the Ponte Alto, one of the finest bridges in the defile. Throughout this passage there have been constructed, in various places, about two leagues apart, large buildings as houses of refuge for travellers overtaken by bad weather.

Of these there are seven in the course of the route.

After crossing the Ponte Alto, the road ascends on the left bank to the gallery of Algaby, where the horrors of the Val Dovedro terminate; for, having passed the Krumbach, the torrent which descends from the Simplon, the road makes a *détour* into a ravine, and thence rises rapidly to the village of Simplon. Here, though we arrived rather early, my guides entreated that I would rest for the night, as the journey had been incessant for the mule and themselves. I had a great desire to descend to Brigg; I dreaded detention, from a change of weather, for certain prognostics led me to expect that the fine skies I had so long been indulged with, were about to cease; and I suspected the plan of resting at Simplon was to gain another day of employment; I therefore offered to pay two days for one if they would proceed: they preferred remaining, and I agreed to stop, though not without some misgiving of the sort of treatment I should receive from *madame*, who had been so unlucky as to get a bad name, which had been scratched upon all the walls and glass of the inns on the line of road, describing her as very uncivil and extortionate. These hints in doggerel and in prose must have done her mischief; it had alarmed me. We entered the inn. She appeared a portly dame, well-dressed à la mode Française,

who might have passed for a commander-in-chief of such an establishment upon the Bath road. She shewed me an excellent bed-room, and asked at what price I would dine, as she served at five and six francs; or, if I would wait for the table-d'hôte, at half-past six, at four francs. If the anger against her is for extravagant charges, her conduct to me at least was perfectly fair. I told her that I was too hungry to wait for the table-d'hôte, that I really wanted a good dinner, and I left it to herself to charge me justly. In the *salle-à-manger* was a party that had arrived *en voiture*: two of them were priests; and two more unprincipled rascals never betrayed their characters, or dishonoured their calling, than these did by their conversation.

*Sept. 14th.*—We left early, after I had taken coffee and paid a fair and moderate bill, in which my excellent dinner was charged, though left to herself, the lowest price she had named; and when it is considered that her table was supplied with viands brought twenty miles, it would be injustice not to say that my prejudices against the hostess were removed; but though I was content, my guide and the lad who owned the mule were not. Poor Ritz Better, the latter, ended his abuse of the extortionate charges made upon him by a hearty cry, to which Hans added all the curses he could



bring to bear upon the landlady's conduct and character.

It was a fine fresh morning. As we ascended from the village to the summit of the Simplon, we saw the Rosboden and its glaciers on the left, mentioned in most guide-books as Monte Rosa, which, however, cannot be seen from the Simplon route. We soon entered upon the more open part of the mountain pasturages, leaving below us on the left the old hospice, and shortly after passed the site of the new one, in which no progress has been made since 1821. The summit, which is 6562 feet above the level of the sea, is exposed to dreadful storms, and it was for protection against these that the plan of a hospice was laid out, and the building commenced by order of Napoleon; but little beyond raising the walls above the foundation was accomplished: its plan extended to two hundred feet in length, and seventy feet in width; it was intended to have been three stages high. Fifteen persons, monks and domestics, were to have formed the establishment, and have been dependent upon the Great St. Bernard; but has been long delayed, if not relinquished.

Not far from the new hospice is a refuge, or the toll-house or barrier, where six francs are paid for each horse—a tax levied for the conservation of the road. Close to the barrier the first view

obtained of the Valais side of the mountain : far distant, and in the lowest depth of the scene the town of Naters, in the valley of the Rhone, is perceived ; above and beyond rose in magnificent array the grandest portion of the Bernese Alps, including the Breithorn, the Jungfrau, and the Monch, crested with their glaciers, especially those, so extensive and distinguished, of the Alesch. On the right the route of the Simplon was seen winding down the mountain side, and on the left the vast form of the Glyshorn bounded this most extraordinary alpine scene, of which I had full enjoyment during the time that the guides were settling about the mule at the barrier. A French traveller, on his way from Italy, stood with me gazing on the wondrous prospect. Whilst we yet looked, enormous clouds began to form, and roll down the side of the Glyshorn in immense volumes : the effect was one of the finest I ever witnessed ; but it was also a hint to hasten our departure. We soon passed the Glacier Gallery, which I found workmen extending, by building covered ways beyond the excavation, to guard against the fall of avalanches, to which this part of the road is exposed. This gallery is called the Glacier Gallery, from its proximity to the glaciers ; not as Mrs. Starke said, in the early editions of her work, because it was “ cut through solid masses of ice ! ”

The road here is admirably constructed. The streams descending from the glaciers of the Schönhorn, are carried below the road by aqueducts. Soon after I had passed the Schalbet gallery, we met a carriage ascending; I was recognised by the travellers within it, and saluted by a hearty laugh, occasioned, I suspect, by my grotesque appearance so near the end of my rambles this season. I rode up, and had the pleasure of meeting two friends, R. A.s, thus far from home, on their way to Italy. After some hasty inquiries we parted: already the change of weather had commenced, and the clouds soon concealed the grand objects around us. We rested a short time at Bersal, and then continued our descent, reaching Brigg early enough to determine me to make what progress I could down the Valais while it was light. I discharged my good-tempered civil guides at Brigg, who proposed returning up the Valais to the Grimsel to-morrow; and ordering a char, was driven, in a mizzling rain, as far as Tourtemagne, where I was sheltered in a tolerable inn.

15th. — The fine weather had broken up in the mountains, and I hastened to get out of the valleys. I engaged a char to take me to Sion, and drove there inclosed, for protection from the weather; by this I lost nothing, as the surrounding objects were concealed by the clouds and rain. I

reached Sion early, and met at the table-d'hôte the Frenchman who had gazed with me the day before on the extraordinary formation of clouds on the Glyshorn. He proposed my joining him in a voiture, the driver agreeing to take us to St. Maurice before eight o'clock, which we accomplished. On the 16th I left St. Maurice at five o'clock in the morning by a diligence for Vevay. We rested to breakfast at Bex. My companions were agreeable, particularly a young French artist returning from Italy. On my arriving at Vevay, I ordered a char to take me in haste to Lausanne, before the departure of the steam-boat for Geneva, and we reached the capital of the Pays de Vaud in time, if it had started, but I was told by the master of the Hôtel du Faucon that it would not depart that day. Not suspecting that for so beggarly a consideration as detaining me at his table-d'hôte, he would tell a lie, I made up my mind to dine at Lausanne, and proceed quietly afterwards in a char. I dined, and met some agreeable people; but a conversation with one of them led to the suspicion that I had been deceived by the landlord; and upon inquiry, I learnt, two hours after my arrival at Lausanne, that the steamer had just started, and that I might, by getting to Morges before it, be taken on board. I ordered another char and hastened from Lausanne to effect this object; I saw the steamer pass Morges—I was five minutes

too late ! When I reached Nyon, the innkeeper advised me to stay there, as the gates of Geneva would be closed before I could arrive. I began to suspect the information of all innkeepers ; but, upon further inquiry, thought it advisable to stay, as the Paris diligence, by Dole, would pass through at eight o'clock on the following morning, and I might be able to obtain a place for France. On the morning of the 17th I was fortunate enough to find one in the cabriolet. I reached Paris on the 19th, and home on the 24th of September.

THE END.

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